

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

ANGLO-CATHOLICISM

NOT APOSTOLICAL:

BEING

AN INQUIRY INTO THE SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY OF THE LEADING DOCTRINES
ADVOCATED IN THE

‘TRACTS FOR THE TIMES,’

AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS

OF

THE ANGLO-CATHOLIC SCHOOL.



WILLIAM LINDSAY ALEXANDER, M.A.

11

Πάντα τοίνυν τὰ παραδιδόμενα ἡμῖν διὰ τὸ νόμου, καὶ προφητῶν, καὶ ἀποστόλων,
καὶ εὐαγγελιστῶν δεχόμεθα, καὶ γινώσκομεν, καὶ σίβομεν, οὐδὲν περαιτέρω τούτων
ἰπιζητοῦντες.—JOAN. DAMASCEN. in *Expos. Fidei*, I. 1.

43

EDINBURGH:

ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK;

AND LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS, LONDON.

MDCCCXLIH.

Druck
A6

BALFOUR AND JACK,
PRINTERS,
NIDDRY STREET, EDINBURGH.

27 471

P R E F A C E.

It is the boast of the Anglo-catholics that their system will fully abide the test by which the Monk of St Lerins has proposed that the true Christian faith should be discriminated from heretical corruptions of it, viz., that it is that “quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est.” It is the design of this book, on the other hand, to show that to part, at least, of this boast their system is not entitled—that it has not *always* been received by *all* true Christians—but, that especially in the earliest days of the church, when under the infallible guidance of the apostles, it was as a system either wholly unknown, or, so far as known, repudiated and condemned.

The strenuous efforts which certain clergymen and laymen of the Anglican church, and principally connected with the university of Oxford, have of late years been making to recommend and disseminate the principles of catholicism in this country, as well as the unexpected success which has attended their exertions, have drawn to this subject a large share of attention and anxiety, on the part of men of all

classes in the community. The subject is not one on which, when the public mind is called to it, reflective men can be indifferent. On the issue of the struggle, Dr Pusey says, in his letter to the Bishop of Oxford, "hangs the destiny of our church." Were this all, the controversy might be left in the hands of those to whom the preservation of the English church is a matter of personal interest. But the influence of this struggle does not terminate with the church of England; it touches every sect and party in the empire; it affects the very substance of our religion, and the dearest of our civil rights. Divested of circumstantialia, the great question at issue is simply this: Does Christianity depend upon the Church as a visible body, or does the Church depend upon Christianity? In other words, is it the Church—existing by the preserving care of God, endowed with mysterious and supernatural power over the destinies of men, and whose ever-vital nucleus is found in the clerical order, by the members of which her order is preserved, her unity manifested, and her power dispensed—Is it the Church, thus constituted, which conveys salvation to men? Or do men, by obtaining salvation, each one for himself, by the reception of God's offer of mercy through Christ, constitute, by their spiritual union with Christ, the Church of God, which is holy, catholic, and invisible, and by their outward fellowship with each other such churches as Christ has appointed to exist visibly on

the earth? This is the great question at issue, which must be justly apprehended, and fairly dealt with before this controversy can even approximate to a close. Now a question like this obviously goes to the very bottom of our religious and ethical systems. Upon the decision of it rests the entire complexion and influence of our Christianity, as well as of our views of society and life. The questions, How may I know religious truths? How may I be saved from guilt? How may I serve God? What are my duties as a man, as a relation, as a subject? What should be the main object of my thoughts and pursuits here?—these and other questions, no less important, will all receive different answers, according as we adopt the one or the other of the two views of the Church as above indicated. Where such questions are involved there is no party, there is no individual, who is not interested in the discussion.

In such a case it is not surprising that many should be found entering the arena of this controversy from different quarters; and, perhaps, it becomes the writer of these lines, in adding himself to the number, to offer an apology for appearing where so many able combatants have already presented themselves. In regard to this I have only to say that, so long as great principles are in controversy before the public, it appears to me to be the duty of every man, who thinks he has anything to say upon the subject, to say it openly and boldly as

he best can, leaving it with the public to determine, as they will very easily and speedily do, whether what he has said be worth notice or not. Nor is it otherwise than favourable to the cause of truth that such liberty of discourse should be permitted and used; for, as one of the greatest philosophers of our own day has justly said, with reference to physical science, that "there is scarcely any well-informed person, who, if he has the will, has not also the power to add something essential to the general stock of knowledge, if he will only observe regularly and methodically some particular class of facts which may most excite his attention, and which his situation may best enable him to study with effect,"¹ so may we say, in reference to questions in theology and morals, that there is no man, who is given to the investigation of such subjects, and who looks at them from his own peculiar stand-point, and speaks of them after his own fashion earnestly and frankly, who may not add something to the means already possessed by the public for coming to a satisfactory conclusion regarding them. It is with the fond hope of rendering some such service (however humble) to the great cause of evangelical truth and scriptural liberty, that the present volume is published.

Influenced by no feelings of a personal kind, but those of respect for the talents, the learning, and the apparent sincerity of the leaders on the Anglo-

¹ Herschell's Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy, p. 133.

catholic side of this controversy, I have aimed, as far as in me lay, to state fairly, and view candidly, their opinions as advocated by themselves. For this purpose, I have carefully perused their principal publications, especially the Tracts for the Times and the Writings of Dr Pusey and Mr Newman; at the same time abstaining from making use, in the preparation of this volume, of any of those works which have appeared against their views. I trust I may have in this way escaped falling into the besetting sin of controversialists—the misrepresentation of an opponent's sentiments. But on this head I will not be confident; for as, on the one hand, one knows not by what perverse delusions one's own feelings and prejudices may mislead one's best intentions; so, on the other, I have often found it far from easy, after I had done my utmost, to be quite sure that I have understood the meaning of my opponents. Constrained to resort to the use of reason and argument, as they themselves assure us, much against their will,¹ and maintaining the extraordinary opinion, that “it continually happens that those who are most skilled in debate, are deficient in sound practical piety”²—sad alternative for a controversial-

¹ “Such troublers of our community [as men who think and speak for themselves, and dissent from the church,] would, in a healthy state of things, be silenced but our times, from whatever cause, being times of confusion, *we are reduced to the use of argument and disputation.*”—*Newman's Lectures on Romanism and Popular Protestantism*. Introd. p. 5.

² Tract, No. 19, p. 3.

ist whose only chance of preserving a character for piety according to this doctrine, is to allow himself to be easily beaten!—it is only natural that their use of a clear style, and a perspicuous logic, should be sparing, and that clouds of mystical verbiage should sometimes be used by them (as an opponent is apt to suspect,) for much the same purpose, for which, according to Homer, Aphrodite enveloped Paris ἡέρι πολλῇ, when she conveyed him to his “sweet-scented couch,” safe from the vengeful spear of the victorious Menelaus.¹ In such cases, one is often constrained to “draw the bow at a venture,” and if, therefore, in any case I have misstated their opinions, and pierced, not my antagonist, but only the cloud in which he was enwrapped, I hope they will do me the justice to believe, that had I seen them more plainly, I might have directed my weapon with greater skill.

Whilst, however, I have endeavoured to examine the doctrines advocated by the Anglo-catholics, as these are expounded in their own writings, I must forewarn the reader not to expect here a *formal reply* to these writings. This I have not attempted, nor would it be possible, without writing many books, to execute such an attempt with success. What I have aimed at has been the selection of great leading essential doctrines; and to these as

¹ Iliad, iii. 381.

advocated by Dr Pusey and his colleagues, I have devoted my attention, abstracting as much as possible from all collateral inquiries, and endeavouring in every case to bring the opinion advanced, and the arguments urged in its defence to the touchstone of apostolic doctrine, as unfolded in the New Testament.

Besides the aspect under which I have here viewed Anglo-catholicism, there are other aspects in which it is not unimportant that it should be studied. There is, for instance, its relation to the "*quod ubique*" and the "*quod ab omnibus*" of Vincent's rule, which, though less important than its relation to the "*quod semper*," is by no means to be overlooked. There is its relation also to *human nature*; for that catholicism meets some great tendency in man is certain, from the extent and permanency of its influence; and it would be worth while to examine carefully and reflectively whether that tendency be in itself a good one or a bad one, whether it be indigenous in our nature, or the result of that corruption which the fall has brought upon us, and whether the gratification of it, therefore, be wholesome or pernicious in a personal and a social point of view. For the former of these tasks, a large mass of materials collected by the industry of many ripe scholars, lies at the disposal of any one who has time, patience, learning, candour, and acuteness enough to make a right use of them; for

the execution of the latter, we must look to some one who combines an extensive knowledge of man and man's history, with habits of careful analysis and meditative research. A work worthy of the theme on either of these topics would confer a real advantage upon the cause of truth at the present moment.

I cannot conclude these prefatory remarks better than by commending this my humble effort to the candid consideration of the Christian public, in the words of one whom Christians of all parties have agreed to revere:—"Me non pigebit sicubi hæsito quærere, nec pudebit sicubi erro discere. Ideo quisquis hoc legit, ubi pariter certus est, pergat mecum; ubi pariter hæsitat, quærat mecum; ubi errorem suum agnoscit, redeat ad me; ubi meum revocat me. Ita ingrediamur simul charitatis viam, tendentes ad Eum de quo dictum, Quæramus faciem ejus."—*AUGUSTIN. de Trin. l. i. c. 2.*

W. L. A.

EDINBURGH,
15th March 1843.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

	Page
Simplicity characteristic of Christianity—Early tendency to corruption in the church—Progress of corruption—Origin and growth of catholicism—Council at Nice—Nicene church—Catholicism of the Anglican church—Relation of Anglicanism to Romanism—The Oxford Tractarians,	1-24

CHAPTER II.

THE RULE OF RELIGIOUS OPINION AND PRACTICE.

Test of religious truth—Means of determining the truth taught in scripture—Anglo-catholic views on this subject—The principle of these views common to them with other sects—The point worth contending for—Argument for tradition,	25-36
---	-------

SECTION I. <i>Form of the Apostolic Teaching.</i> —The oral teaching of the apostles not in the form of a creed—Character of apostolic preaching,	36-43
---	-------

SECTION II. <i>Alleged existence of a Symbolical Standard in the Apostolic Churches.</i> —The “good deposit” committed to Timothy—The “form of sound words” not a creed—Timothy’s good profession—The test of Christianity proposed by John—Grounds on which converts were received by the apostles—No creed of apostolic authorship extant—None known to the early Fathers—Opinion of Du Pin,	43-66
--	-------

	Page
SECTION III. <i>Use and authority of Tradition as preserved in the Writings of the early Church.</i> —Argument in favour of the apostolicity of tradition—Obligations which we owe to the Christian Fathers—Respect due to catholic tradition—Catholicity not necessarily a proof of apostolicity—Unanimity of the early church traceable to mere human causes—Influence of individual Fathers in producing catholicity of doctrine—The Fathers competent witnesses for the canon of Scripture—But not final judges of the meaning of Scripture—Analogy between tradition and the common law of the realm—Difficulties in the Fathers greater than in Scripture—Impracticability of the Anglo-catholic rule of faith—Conduces to augment unduly the power of the clergy—Statements of the Fathers concerning the interpretation of Scripture—Opinion of the Fathers concerning tradition—Concluding inference, 67–108	
SECTION IV. <i>Right of private judgment in interpreting Scripture.</i> —Reasonableness of such a claim—Alleged obscurity of Scripture—Creeds not adapted to produce uniformity of opinion—Statements of Scripture on this head—Opinion of the Fathers on the right of private judgment—Deference to tradition productive of disrespect to Scripture—Interpretation of Scripture—Concluding summary—Advantages of these conclusions, . . . 109–135	

CHAPTER III.

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

<i>A church and the church</i> —Doctrine of the Anglo-catholics concerning the church—Protestant doctrine on this head—Main point of difference—The visible church—Meaning of Matthew v. 14—Meaning of Matthew xvi. 18—Meaning of Matthew xviii. 17—Meaning of 1 Timothy iii. 15—“The pillar and ground of the truth”—The church a spiritual body—The church the body of Christ—The church that for which Christ died—The church the general assembly of the sanctified—No salvation out of the church—Unity of the church—The church imperishable—Concluding remarks, . . . 136–181	
--	--

CHAPTER IV.

THE CLAIMS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

	Page
Social tendency of Christianity—Divine institution of the Christian ministry—Duties of Christian ministers—Doctrines of the catholics concerning the Christian ministry—Connection of this doctrine with that of the visibility of the church—Positions assumed in support of this doctrine—Such doctrines require <i>clear</i> proof, 182–194	
SECTION I. <i>Apostolical Succession</i> .—Did Christ authorise the apostles to appoint successors to themselves?—Christ sent the apostles as the Father had sent him—The apostolic commission—Did the apostles appoint successors?—Case of Epaphroditus—Case of Timothy and Titus—Absurdity of supposing that the apostles could have successors—Integrity of the episcopal chain—Value of this if true—The truth of it suspected—Existence of some of the parties doubtful—Confusion of the evidence respecting the order of others—Want of evidence that the alleged succession is pure—Ways in which the succession may be corrupted and broken—The present state of the church no safe criterion of the past—Gross irregularities have prevailed in the appointment of bishops—Flaws in the succession in the Anglican church—Uncertainty of all claims based on this alleged succession—The succession essential to catholicism,	195–239
SECTION II. <i>Ordination</i> .—Doctrine of scripture on this head—Choice of the pastor vested in the members of the church—Inauguration to office by imposition of hands—To whom does the power of ordaining belong?—Concluding remarks,	239–253
SECTION III. <i>Priesthood of the Clergy</i> .—Unlikeliness of this—Pastors never called priests in scripture—The power of binding and loosing granted to the apostles—The apostles alone have this power—Ministers stewards of the mysteries of God—If Christian ministers are priests, they should offer sacrifice—Alleged connection between the sacramental efficacy and priestly power—Futility of the claims of the catholic clergy—True dignity of the Christian pastor,	254–276

CHAPTER V.

JUSTIFICATION UNTO LIFE.

Page

Man's guilt and pollution—ground of a sinner's salvation—Anglo-catholic views of the nature and process of man's salvation—Anglo-catholic views of justification and sanctification—Anglo-catholic view of regeneration—Anglo-catholic doctrine of baptismal salvation—Scripture statements—Meaning of the word <i>Baptise</i> in the New Testament—The baptism of Christ a baptism by the Spirit—Meaning of John iii. 5—The apostolic commission—Meaning of Titus iii. 5—Meaning of 1 Peter iii. 21—Meaning of Acts ii. 38—Baptism of Paul—Baptism into Christ's death—The baptism which puts on Christ—Catholic view of baptism improbable—Statements of Paul regarding baptism—Scripture doctrine of justification by faith—Real relation of baptism to regeneration,	277–329
--	---------

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE,	330
---------------------	-----

SECTION I. <i>Design of the Christian Life.</i> —Anglo-catholic view incompatible with salvation through Christ's merits alone—Scripture doctrine of justification by works—Doctrine of our Lord as to justification by works—Doctrine of James on this head in harmony with that of Paul—Meaning of the word <i>Justify</i> —Thesis which James maintains—Cases adduced by the apostle in illustration of his thesis—Concluding remarks,	331–352
SECTION II. <i>Character of the Christian Life.</i> —Statements of Dr Pusey on this head—Arbitrariness of his distinction between sins before and sins after baptism—Scripture teaches that all sin may be forgiven through Christ—The Christian life not one of gloom and dread—The Anglo-catholic doctrine not favourable to holiness—Evils of the Anglo-catholic views,	353–369
SECTION III. <i>Means by which the Christian Life is to be promoted, and its ultimate design secured.</i> —All good in man produced by the Spirit—The Spirit to be retained by obedience and prayer—The	

Spirit works in connection with the word—The ordinances of Christianity benefit by instructing us—Preaching used in the primitive and early churches—Romanist and Anglican innovation—Their views unscriptural—Commendation of preaching in the New Testament—Contrast in this respect between the church system and the apostolic—Anglo-catholic views of the Lord's supper—A body cannot be *spiritually* present—No sacrifice where no blood is shed—The blessing of the cup not a consecration—Christ's the only sacrifice for sins—The communion of the body and blood of Christ merely symbolical—Benefits of the Lord's supper as simply a commemorative ordinance—Evil consequences of the Anglo-catholic system—Personal religion alone real, 369–406

APPENDIX.

A.—Meaning of the title “Angel of the Church,” as used in Rev. ii. and iii.,	409
B.—Dr Arnold on Anglo-catholicism,	413
C.—Dr Hook on the evangelical clergy of the Church of England,	415
D.—Vincent's test of truth,	416
E.—Deference to tradition on the part of the English Reformers and others,	419
F.—Chrysostom and others on 2 Tim. i. 13,	422
G.—Evidence for Scripture and for tradition compared,	423
H.—Difficulties attending the study of the Fathers,	426
I.—Danger of renouncing the right of private judgment,	427
J.— <i>A church and the church</i> ,	430
K.—Opinions of the Reformers concerning the invisibility of the church universal,	432
L.—Anglo-catholic assumptions and denunciations,	433
M.—Salvation through the church,	435
N.—Bellarmine on the visible unity of the church,	436
O.—Bossuet's argument for the Church of Rome,	437
P.—Theophylact on Matt. xxviii. 20—Chrysostom on the authority of the apostles,	438
Q.—Independency of the early churches,	439
R.—Passages in the New Testament in which the word “mystery” is used,	442
S.—Newman on justification through faith,	444



AN

INQUIRY,



CHAPTER FIRST.

INTRODUCTORY.

Μέχρι τῶν τότε χρόνων παρθένος καθαρά καὶ ἀδιάφθορος ἔμεινεν ἡ Ἐκκλησία.
. . . Ὡς δ' ὁ ἱεὺς τῶν Ἀποστόλων χορὸς διάφορον ἐιλήφει τοῦ βίου τέλος, παρε-
ληλύθει τε ἡ γενεὰ ἐκείνη τῶν αὐταῖς ἀκοαῖς τῆς ἐνθίου σοφίας ἱπακοῦσαι κατη-
ξιωμένων, τηνικαῦτα τῆς ἀβίου πλάνης τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐλάμβανεν ἡ σύστασις διὰ τῆς
τῶν ἐτεροδιδασκάλων ἀπάτης.

“Up to this time the church had remained a virgin, pure and incorrupt. But no sooner had the sacred choir of the apostles in diverse manner ended life, and the generation of those who were privileged to listen to the very sounds of divinely-inspired wisdom passed away, than the faction of ungodly error arose through the deceit of false teachers.”—EUSEBIUS, in *Hist. Eccles.*, iii. 32.

SIMPLICITY, as distinguished from that which perplexes by its intricacy, or which deludes by its ambiguity, is a pre-eminent characteristic of the religion of Jesus Christ, as it formed a peculiar feature and ornament of his personal character whilst upon earth.

To whatever part of that religion, as presented to us in the inspired record of his will, we turn our attention, the traces of this simplicity present themselves. In the *doctrines* which he inculcates we find simple truth,—truth, the purity of which is corrupted by no infusion of error, and the perfection of which no mistake or deficiency impairs. In the *course* which he has marked out for his people to pursue, there is simplicity at once in the single end in which that course terminates, and in the straight-forward path by which it is to be pursued; and in all the *institutions* and *ordinances* of his appointment there is simplicity, for all of them are characterized by the peculiarity of being fitted to produce exactly their given purpose in the economy of grace, and nothing more; no part of them being designed merely for attractiveness or show, and none of them being calculated, (in its original form,) to minister to any other purpose than the spiritual advantage of the church and the glory of the church's Head.

This simplicity is not only a beautiful ornament of Christianity; it is so closely associated with the very form and essence of Christianity, that no professing Christian can depart from it without thereby changing, in proportion to the degree and direction of his departure, the religion which he holds, from that which is set forth in the New Testament, as the religion which is in Christ Jesus. A departure from the simplicity of doctrine is an embracing of

error which must prove injurious; or it is a letting slip of principles which are essential to our continued nourishment in piety. To swerve from the simplicity of *practice* is to turn into paths which conduct away from God, and which, however flowery and enticing they may appear, need only to be pursued consistently to lead us at length into open rebellion against him. And to forsake simplicity of *ritual* is only to pamper human pride, or nurse human folly by an abuse of the very means which God has provided for the purpose of humbling our pride and purging away our folly.

Undesirable, however, as are all such departures from the original form of Christian truth, practice, and institute, we cannot peruse the history of the church without being satisfied that a strong tendency to this is incident to its members in their present imperfect state; even in the days of the apostles, men were found giving heed to seducing errors and antichristian opinions; and hardly had the last of the apostles left the earth, when a whole host of innovations burst upon the church, which soon left no trace of its original simplicity and purity. A passion for novelty; a desire to incorporate with Christianity the doctrines of pagan philosophy, and to make the Christian church, as a visible institution, respectable in the eyes of the world; a misguided regard for the institutes of Judaism leading to an ingrafting of these upon the original model of the Christian common-

wealth; an insidious distrust of the innate vitality of Christianity, and its power to maintain itself independently of ecclesiastical confederacies or the bulwark of secular power; and above all, the growth of a worldly spirit, displaying itself in coldness on the part of the people; and avarice and ambition on the part of the clergy, had, long ere Constantine put the last hand to the mischief, eaten out the vitals of Christianity, and changed it from a simple, unassuming, unostentatious scheme of religious benefit to man, into a great hierarchical corporation, the prevailing tendency of which was to make religion a matter of rites and ceremonies,—to elevate the Christian pastor, whose duty it is to feed the flock of God with the pure food of truth, into the awful priest, whose place it is to stand between God and man, and, by power derived from the former, to influence not by his doctrine, but by certain rites of mysterious meaning, the eternal destiny of the latter,—and to make the church, which, according to the doctrine of the apostles, is the invisible body of Christ, a great, compact, visible engine of spiritual dominion. In the system thus described, we have the substance of the system of catholicism, to which Romanism has added many corruptions of her own, and to which Anglicanism, whilst protesting against these additions of later ages, would fain bring back the whole of Christendom, as to the pattern of primitive order, loveliness, and strength.

It is not my intention at present to attempt anything approaching to a minute detail of the successive steps by which the catholic church rose out of the bosom of primitive Christianity, and advanced to the condition in which it appeared after the council of Nice,—a condition to which its admirers point us back as its palmiest and best. A few cursory notices, however, bearing upon this subject, may not be unacceptable to the general reader, and may serve materially to facilitate our subsequent inquiries.

If we cast our eye over the field which ecclesiastical history presents to us at the close of the apostolic period, *i. e.* at the commencement of the second century of the Christian era, we observe a vast multitude of churches, each consisting of a body of believers united together for the observance of ordinances, and for mutual advantage and edification, and each placed under the management of a set of officers, presided over by one having the title of angel of the church, or bishop of the flock.¹ Whether this were the earliest form of these churches, may perhaps be questioned, but that this was the form in which they existed at the period mentioned, seems historically certain.²

Of the churches thus constituted and regulated, Mr Waddington, one of the most recent, and per-

¹ See APPENDIX, note A.

² Mosheim, *De Rebus Christianorum*, Sæc. ii. § 20. Campbell's *Eccles. Hist. Lect. vi.*

haps, upon the whole, the best of our British church historians, observes, that they “formed a sort of federative body of independent religious communities, dispersed through the greater part of the empire, in continual communication, and in constant harmony with each other.”¹ Of *what* sort this federative body was, Mr Waddington does not say. So far as the original records inform us, it does not appear that the confederation of these churches was based upon any thing but a community of faith, and a unity of desire and purpose. Holding the same Head, they looked upon each other as members of the same spiritual body, and therefore were ready to show offices of kindness to each other, and to co-operate in works of usefulness wherever they had opportunity. In short, their confederation was one of principle, not of polity, the basis of which was found in the Bible, and not in any edicts or contracts of their own, and the bond of which was Christian love, not human authority.²

Such a state of things retained much of the simplicity of early times. It had, however, within it, the elements of corruption. Already had the minds of many of the bishops and presbyters in these churches got possessed of the idea that a spiritual and invisible confederacy was not enough—that there

¹ History of the Church, ch. 2.

² Mosheim's History of the Church, Cent. i. Part ii. ch. 2, sect. 14.

was needed beyond this an outward bond of union—that the churches, instead of being a federation of independent bodies, each governing itself, yet concerned for the general welfare of the whole, should be formed into one great incorporation, based upon common principles, pervaded by one spirit, and governed by one law. To give strength to this idea, two things mainly co-operated. The one was the persecutions to which the churches were exposed, which naturally led them, for the sake of united support and protection, to draw still more closely the ties of their intercourse. The other and the more influential, was the frequent occurrence among them of erroneous opinions and differences of opinion as to points on which they deemed it of moment that they should be agreed. A desire to put down error, and to prevent dissension, naturally led to the wish that a well-defined understanding should be come to as to what opinions they would tolerate, and with what they would forbear. Differences of sentiment among the bishops would naturally lead to conferences and to councils where these differences might be discussed, and some decision adopted as to what view was to be regarded as the true one. Hence would arise creeds and confessions, and out of all this would naturally grow the idea of an outward visible community, marked by the adherence of its members to a common set of opinions, and by their

co-operating for the maintenance of these against all who doubted or disbelieved them.¹

The first meeting of this sort of which we have any intimation, took place in the middle of the second century, between Polycarp bishop of Smyrna, and Anicetus bishop of Rome. A dissension had arisen between the churches of the east and those of the west, as to the proper time and mode of celebrating the feast of Easter; and on this and some other points, regarding the nature of which we are not informed, differences of sentiment existed between these two bishops. Polycarp accordingly journeyed to Rome, where, after a lengthened conference, it was agreed that, as neither could convince the other of his error, such matters should be held indifferent, and not be allowed to disturb the unity of the church. Polycarp shortly after this suffered martyrdom, and Anicetus did not long survive him. A new race succeeded, less gentle, less pious, greatly more ambitious. About half a century after this conference of these bishops, Victor bishop of Rome issued an authoritative command to the churches of the east to conform to the practice of those of the west in respect of the matters on which they differed—a proceeding which, though it was repelled with indignation by the eastern, and was condemned by Irenæus

¹ Mosheim, *De Rebus Christianorum*, Saec. ii. sect. 22.

bishop of Lyons, and many of the western churches, constituted nevertheless the first effective step towards the aggressions subsequently made by the bishops of Rome on the liberties of the rest of the church.¹

From these steps certain important consequences resulted. In the *first* place, the idea came to be established in men's minds of the catholic church as a visible body, holy, compact, unanimous, and thoroughly organized.² *Secondly*, As this idea, if not originally started in Rome, suited well with the notions of universal empire in temporal things, which were so much cherished by the Roman people, and as it was one which the numbers, wealth, talents, and, above all, the active, enterprising habits of the Romans, gave them excellent opportunities of carrying out, it became from this time forward the one grand ruling principle of their ecclesiastical ambition; and whilst the Greeks and Asiatics were seeking to extend the knowledge of Christianity, or were anxiously engaged in the literary efforts necessary for its explanation or defence, the Roman bishops and fathers were bending all their efforts to the formation

¹ Euseb. Hist. Eccles. iv. 14; v. 24. Mosheim, De Reb. Christ. Saec. ii. sect. 72.

² Augusti, Hist. Eccles. p. 9, Lips. 1834. Gieseler, Kirchen Geschichte, Bd. i. S. 174—177. The term "catholic church," as applied to a visible body, occurs for the first time in the epistle of the church at Smyrna, concerning the martyrdom of Polycarp, preserved by Eusebius (iv. 15). Ignatius uses the term in his epistle to the Smyrnaeans (sect. 8), but with a different sense.

of a great hierarchical system, of which Rome should be the centre, and the bishop of Rome the head.¹ *Thirdly*, A meaning was attached to the terms *heresy* and *schism* different from what these had borne in the days of the apostles. In the New Testament, *heresy* means the pursuing of a perverse, self-willed course in a church or congregation, whereby its peace is destroyed, its order interrupted, and its usefulness impaired; and *schism* means a quarrel in a church proceeding from bad temper on the part of some of the members?² Out of the idea of a catholic church, however, arose a different meaning for these words. *Heresy* then came to signify a departure in *opinion* from the authorized creed of the church general; and *schism* was applied to the conduct of those who refused to acknowledge the outward confederacy which called itself the catholic church, or to yield up their independence and liberties to the ambitious designs of the Romish bishop. Hence the curious and interesting fact, that many who have come down to modern times with the stigma of "heretic" attached to their names, are found, upon careful scrutiny, to have been men whose whole crime lay in contending for the pure doctrine of the apostles against the growing corruptions of the catholics; and many who were solemnly excommunicated as schismatics, turn out to have been persons who came under this ban

¹ See Hampden's Bampton Lecture, p. 14—16. 2d edit.

² See Campbell's ninth Prel. Dissert., parts 3 and 4.

solely for their attachment to that liberty of judgment and action which they deemed to belong to them as rational and accountable creatures, and which they believed Christianity to sanction. Thus, Nestorius was denounced as a heretic, because he refused to call the Virgin Mary "the mother of God;"¹ and bodies which maintained substantially the orthodox truth, were cut off from the catholic church because they held, along with that, some trifling error of opinion, which the church had not sanctioned; as, in the case of the cathari or puritans who opposed the restoration to the church of any who had apostatized from the faith, even after he had repented. All this shows at how early a period the idea of the superiority of uniformity in

¹ Mosheim, Cent. v. Part ii. ch. 5, sect. 5—9. Campbell's Ecclesiast. Hist., Lect. 14. Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. viii. p. 287, (Milman's edition). There can be no doubt but that Nestorius had rendered himself unpopular by the severity with which he had sought to put down what he considered error, and that in the severity with which he was treated by the council of Ephesus, "his violent dealing came upon his own pate." At the same time the sole alleged cause of his degradation was his refusal to use the word *θεοτόκος* (God-bearer) of the Virgin Mary. On this point the testimony of Socrates is very explicit. After declaring that though he had before commemorated the faults of Nestorius, he would not, to please any one, depreciate him unduly, but state the simple truth, he says:—"Nestorius seems to me to have followed neither Paul of Samosata nor Photinus; nor did he at all affirm that Christ was a mere man; but he dreaded *the word only* (τὴν λέξιν μόνην, i. e. *θεοτόκος*,) like a spectre." Hist. Eccles. vii. 32. Much valuable information concerning the views of Nestorius is contained in a Tract, by P. E. Jablonski, entitled, *Exercitatio Historico-Theologica de Nestorianismo*, &c. Berolini, 1724.

² Mosheim, Cent. ii. Part ii. chap. 5, sect. 17, 18.

all things to agreement in essentials had been engendered by the conception of a great visible catholic church. *Fourthly*, A very pernicious error was gradually introduced respecting the standard of religious truth and practice. In determining the true doctrine of the church, and settling the catholic creed, appeal was continually made to the churches which had been formed or fed by the personal ministry of the apostles. This was done very naturally in the scarcity which then existed of copies of the written scriptures, and also from the fact that many of the churches had received their sole knowledge of divine things through the ministration of accredited members of these apostolic churches. It came, however, in a short time, to pass, that what was at first done from convenience or necessity, was adopted as a rule in the church, and things came to be ordained and defended, not by any appeal to Scripture, but upon the ground that such things had been handed down in the apostolic churches through a regular succession of bishops, and were consequently to be received as of divine authority. It was upon this ground that Victor claimed the submission of the churches of the east to his mandate, and upon this ground alone that they resisted it. In their long-protracted controversies on the subject, no attempt was made on either side to appeal to Scripture; the sole question between them was with which party lay the greater weight of traditionary

authority, the westerns claiming the authority of Peter and Paul, and the easterns that of John, in support of their views, though upon a point on which none of these apostles has uttered one word in any of their writings. It was upon this ground also that they argued against the heretics. "I here affirm," says Tertullian in his tract on the Proscription of Heretics, "that what the apostles preached, *i.e.* what Christ revealed to them, may be proved in no other way than through those churches themselves, which the apostles founded by preaching to them, as well by the living voice, as afterwards by letters. This being the case, it follows that all doctrines, agreeing with those of these apostolic churches, the sources and fountains of the faith, must be reckoned true."¹ Out of this also, great help was gotten by the Romish church in her ambitious projects: for as she was the only apostolic church in the west, she naturally drew to her the deference and the homage of all the churches in that part of the world, and thus strengthened herself against her eastern rivals. That this is no mere supposition of what *might* have been, but is what actually did occur, may be seen from the following passage from the work of Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, who died in the beginning of the third century. After stating that the tradition of the apostles had been preserved

¹ Cap. 21.

in *many* churches, through a succession of bishops, he proceeds to say,—“ But as it would be a long process in a volume like this, to enumerate the succession in all the churches, we content ourselves with the church at Rome, the greatest, the most ancient, and one well known to all, founded by these two most glorious apostles Peter and Paul. By pointing out the traditions which she has from the apostles,—the faith announced to men, and which has come to us through a succession of bishops, we confound all those who in any way conclude what is not meet. For to this church, on account of its mightier authority, it is necessary that every church, *i.e.* all believers, should conform, for in it, in common with all others, is preserved that tradition which was given by the apostles.”¹ Thus it was that tradition usurped the place of the written word, or received a place of equality with it. A wide door was thereby opened for all sorts of additions to the faith, and all sorts of departures from the simplicity which is in Christ Jesus. *Fifthly*, In the quotations above given, great emphasis is laid upon the *succession* of bishops from the days of the apostles, as tending to authenticate the traditions held in the catholic church. So far as this goes, the regularity of succession was a point of first-rate importance; for if tradition is to be allowed any weight at all,

¹ Adv. Haer. iii. 3.

much will depend upon the class and number of persons through whom it passes. Not content, however, with insisting upon this, they soon began to represent this alleged regularity of succession, as conferring a peculiar official virtue on the individual who formed part of it; and this, combining with the superstitious notions which had been gradually growing up, regarding the sacredness of the clerical character and the mysteriousness of the clerical functions, speedily led to the notion, that along each of these lines of episcopal succession, there was transmitted from the apostles, and through them from Christ himself, the awful and mysterious virtue which, communicated by the bishop in the act of ordination, could alone qualify any one for the duties of the clerical office. Hence arose the doctrine of apostolic succession as essential to the validity of ordination, and the administration of the sacraments,—a doctrine which is avowedly the pillar and ornament of the whole system of catholicism, and one of which we find distinct traces at a comparatively early period in the history of the church.

Such were some of the leading views which grew up in the bosom of the Christian church, from the adoption of the principle of catholicism. Opposed by many pious and conscientious believers, they nevertheless, after a struggle of more than two centuries, were at length firmly established by the decrees of the council held at Nice or Nicaea, in Bithynia, un-

der the auspices of Constantine the Great. This council, which is the first in the list of œcumenical or general councils, was convened in the year 325, and was attended by the emperor in person, and a vast multitude of ecclesiastics, of all ranks, and from all parts of the Christian world. Its avowed object was the settling of the Arian controversy, which had been for some time raging with great fury in many parts of the empire, especially in Egypt; but "the holy and apostolic council," as they called themselves, did not confine their attention to that matter. Besides denouncing Arius, and drawing up a creed to express the views of the catholic church on the points in dispute, they took up and settled some other heresies, determined the long disputed question about Easter in favour of Rome, defined the status of the clergy, and the rank and dignity of the bishops, metropolitans, and patriarchs, adopted certain regulations about synods and dioceses, and decreed that, from that time forward, the bishops of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem, should bear the title of patriarchs, and be revered as the primates of the whole church. These regulations, with accidental modifications, to adapt them to different places, were embraced by the great mass of the Christian church, and formed the principal basis on which the vast superstructure of the Romish hierarchy was reared.

To the church thus developed and established, all

true catholics look back with reverence, as to their model and directress. When we come a little farther down, however, in the history of Christianity, we encounter certain additions made to the creed and to the rules of the Nicene council, which are regarded by many catholics as corruptions and unauthorized departures from the primitive faith and practice. Of these it will not be necessary to take any particular notice in the inquiry to which the present work is devoted, as they belong to Popery or Romanism, rather than to that form of catholicism which assumes the nature sometimes of Anglicanism, and sometimes of the Church-system in this country. Confining myself within these bounds, the questions which will fall to be discussed respect the following points:—The rule of religious faith and practice; the catholic church; the functions and claims of the clergy; the means by which men become Christians, and especially the ground of a sinner's acceptance with God; the end of the Christian life, and the means best adapted for the securing of that end. On all these vital points, errors of a most pernicious kind seem to me to be entertained by the advocates of Anglo-catholicism, as I hope to be able to show in the course of the present inquiry.¹

The increased notoriety which has been recently given to catholic doctrines, from the zealous efforts

¹ See APPENDIX, Note B.

put forth by certain distinguished members of the university of Oxford, has led many into the notion, that such doctrines are now for the first time advocated in the Anglican church. But this is a mistake. As the Oxford writers themselves have amply shown, the views they advocate have always been recognised and taught more or less extensively within that communion. At the same time, they have all along had to contend with considerable opposition from different classes of its members. To the Erastian party in the church they have ever been distasteful, because they come into collision with the favourite doctrine of that party, that the church should be under the control of the civil power. By the Liberal party they have been disliked, because of their anti-protestant character, and of the restrictions which they impose on freedom of thought and opinion. And by the Evangelical party, they were wont to be held in a species of abhorrence, because of their opposition to those doctrines which that party regard as essential to Christianity and to salvation. Of late, however, circumstances have occurred to soften very much the asperities of these parties towards each other, and to draw them together upon ground which they might maintain in unison against the common foe. It is easy to see that, with a reformed House of Commons, into which men of all religious opinions may find access, the doctrines of Erastianism are not those which may with safety be avowed, lest

perchance our legislators may take those who avow them at their word, and exercise their right of control over the church with more freedom than is convenient or desirable for its members. No less danger may be apprehended, in the same quarter, from the doctrines of the liberal or simply protestant party in the church ; for, if the opinion be maintained, that all things are to be brought to the test of Scripture, and that the outward regulation of the church must rest with the private judgments of the government and legislature, it is obviously very possible that certain arrangements which the church of England deems essential, may be judged by these parties to be neither scriptural nor expedient. As respects the evangelical party, the ground occupied by them in the Anglican church has always been, and always been felt to be, precarious and perilous. Constrained by conscientious conviction to explain away many parts of the formularies to which they had solemnly pledged their unfeigned assent and consent, and thus to waver continually between their private creed and the formularies of their church, they have been driven upon a course of refined casuistry, which ordinary minds cannot well understand, which in many cases seems sorely to have perplexed and troubled their own, and which, in spite of all the good they did, has made them objects of censure, and in some cases of contempt, to their brethren of other

parties in the church.¹ On the ground, therefore, of none of these parties could a platform be laid for the reunion of the whole into one body. At this crisis, the voice of Dr Pusey was heard from the venerable halls of Oxford, exclaiming, "We have been born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. The Lord Jesus Christ gave his Spirit to his apostles; they in turn laid their hands on those who should succeed them; and these again on others; and so the sacred gift has been handed down to our present bishops, who have appointed us as their assistants, and in some sense representatives. Now, every one of us believes this. I know that some at first will deny they do; still they do believe it, only it is not sufficiently practically impressed upon their minds. They *do* believe it; for it is the doctrine of the ordination service, which they have recognized as truth in the most solemn season of their lives. In order, then, not to prove, but to remind and impress, I entreat your attention to the words used when you were made ministers of Christ's church. The office of priesthood was thus committed to you:—'Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the church of God now committed unto thee, by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost for-

¹ See APPENDIX, Note C.

give, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God, and of his holy sacraments. In the name, &c.’”¹ The note thus sounded, was often repeated; and caught up and prolonged by others, it has well nigh vibrated through every corner of the church of England. “Why,” exclaims Dr Pusey, in another tract, “why should we talk so much of an *establishment*, and so little of an APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION? Why should we not seriously endeavour to impress our people with this plain truth,—that by separating themselves from our communion, they separate themselves not only from a decent, orderly, useful society, but from the only church in this realm which has a right to be quite sure that she has the Lord’s body to give to his people.”² To this appeal, a hearty response has apparently been given by hundreds of the clergy of the Anglican church; and if we may believe the organs of the Oxford party, the number of its adherents is increasing every year. The natural conclusion from this is, that a principle which has proved itself so powerful in bringing together parties formerly so far estranged from each other, must, instead of being a novelty in the system of any of these parties, be a principle to which in reality, though perhaps unconsciously, they had all given in

¹ Tracts for the Times, No. 1, p. 4.

² Ibid. No. 4, p. 5.

their adherence, when they became incorporated in the ecclesiastical body of which they form the parts.

If it be a mistake to regard the doctrines of the Oxford tractarians as novelties in the Anglican church, it is on the other hand an act of injustice to these writers to represent them as secretly favouring the system of Romanism, and covertly labouring to bring this country once more under the yoke of Rome. Such assertions are continually made by certain of their opponents, but, as it appears to me, unfairly and without truth. That as catholics they have more in common with the church of Rome than protestants in general have—that they may have occasionally expressed themselves with incautious reverence towards that church,—and that the effect of all this on certain minds that are caught by appearances; and do not stop to reflect before they act, may have been to induce such to become proselytes to Romanism,—are facts which may be admitted, without the consequence necessarily following, that the Anglican system is only a modification of Romanism, and that the Anglican divines are only Romanists in disguise. The principles from which the two systems respectively set out are essentially different. The principle of the Romanist is implicit deference to the church's dogmas, at whatever period these may have been issued; the principle of the Anglican is implicit deference to the doctrines of the church *while she was yet one*. Whether this

ground be tenable or not is another question; but assuming that it is, the Anglican has sufficient reason in principle for stopping short of Romanism. In this case, all doctrines held by Romanists, for which no authority can be pleaded from Scripture, or the writings of the ante-Nicene church, are mere innovations, which the Anglican cannot embrace without deserting the first principles of his system. For such doctrines the Romanist may be able to argue very plausibly, and perhaps they may coalesce very naturally with certain tenets of Anglicanism; still there is this against them, that they are *unauthorized* by the only standard to which a consistent Anglican can appeal. There is thus, as it appears to me, an insuperable barrier between the Anglican and Romanist systems, which can be overcome only by the one or the other of these parties deserting its distinctive principles. I believe Mr Froude wrote quite sincerely when he declared,—“ I never could be a Romanist; I never could think all those things in Pope Pius’s creed necessary to salvation.”¹

Without meaning to express approbation of all the means which the Oxford party have used for the dissemination of their opinions, I feel constrained to say, that the zeal they have displayed in diffusing what they regard as truth, is no less creditable to them, than are the learning, acuteness and

¹ Remains, i. 434. “ Popery,” says one of the tractarians, “ must be destroyed; it cannot be reformed.” Tract No. 20, p. 3.

earnest seriousness with which they have advocated their sentiments. I feel further bound to add, that whilst their leading doctrines seem to me fraught with dangerous error, there is much in their writings deserving of the candid consideration of every sincere inquirer after truth. In impugning their errors, therefore, I would desire to do justice to whatever of true doctrine or right feeling I find in their productions, convinced that it is only in such a spirit that they can be either fairly or successfully encountered.

CHAPTER SECOND.

THE RULE OF RELIGIOUS OPINION AND PRACTICE.

"Οτι δεῖ πᾶν ῥῆμα ἢ πρᾶγμα πιστοῦσθαι τῇ μαρτυρίᾳ τῆς Θεοπνεύστου γραφῆς.

"Every word and every deed ought to be accredited by the testimony of inspired Scripture."—BASIL. *in Ascet. Reg.* 26.

"Contra Rationem nemo sobrius; contra Scripturas nemo Christianus."

"No man who contradicts Reason is in his senses; no man who contradicts the Scriptures is a Christian."—AUGUSTIN. *de Trin.* 4, 6.

As the existence of *opinion* presupposes the existence of a standard by which that opinion is determined, it will be admitted on all hands, that before any doctrines or duties of a religious nature can be enforced upon men, there must be some common test by an appeal to which their claims upon our submission may be tried.

In this all parties are agreed. When, however, from this we proceed to ask, *What* is the test by which all religious opinions are to be estimated, and by the decisions of which all men should abide? immediately the different sects resile from each other, and arrange themselves in three great classes.

Of these the Rationalist party occupy the one extreme, and the Romanist the other. By the former it is proposed that all things should be brought to the standard of human reason; by which they mean not only that every man is to believe and act according to the judgment of his own mind, (for this all must admit who allow man the power of intelligent action,) but that in forming these judgments, he must appeal to no standard above or beyond the common experience of the race. The Romanist, on the other hand, maintains, that in forming these judgments we should render the most unqualified deference to the authority of the church, not only as the interpreter of Scripture, but also as possessing within herself the ever-enduring fountain of Divine knowledge. Between these two extremes stand all those who receive the Bible as the inspired word of God, who regard it as containing all that is necessary for salvation and for good morals, and who bow with implicit reverence to its dictates as the only infallible divinely appointed standard of faith and practice.

With this last party the Anglo-catholics profess substantially to agree, so far as the mere test of truth is concerned. It is their boast that they occupy the middle path between Rationalism and Romanism, neither arrogating to themselves the right of measuring Divine revelations by the standard of human knowledge, nor presuming to assign to even the best

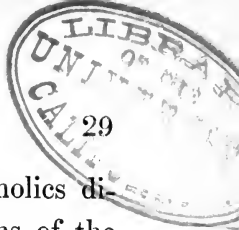
authenticated doctrines of the church, any other than a place of subordination to the written word of God; far less claiming for the church a continuance in it through all ages, of an infallible power of determining what is true and necessary to be believed. At the same time, they so far defer to tradition as to adopt rites and ceremonies which they find to have universally prevailed in the church previous to its separation into different parties, even though no distinct trace of such should be found in the New Testament; or, to express their opinion in the words of Bishop Beveridge, as quoted with approbation by Dr Pusey,¹ they retain “observances nowhere enjoined in Holy Scripture directly and by name, yet which have, during 1400 years from the apostles, been every where received into the public use of the church; nor can there be found any church during that period not agreeing thereto.” With this exception,—on which, in the present discussion, it does not appear necessary to lay much stress,—Dr Pusey and his party may be regarded as maintaining, to use the words of one of themselves, “the claim of Scripture to be sole and paramount as a rule of faith.”²

Having agreed upon the test of truth, the next step is to inquire, by what means the decisions of that test may be most correctly ascertained. On

¹ Letter to the Bishop of Oxford, 2d edit. p. 42.

² Keble. Sermon on Primitive Tradition, 4th edit. p. 31.

this subject, the answer which, judging from the analogy of other cases, one would be ready to give in the case of religious opinion, is, that each man for himself must, as he best can, determine what principles the admitted standard embodies, and by these regulate his opinions and his conduct. It is so in other departments of human inquiry. When we have agreed on a common standard of duration or extension, we leave each man to determine for himself in every case what that standard indicates. When we have established a standard of morals, we admit the right of every man to judge for himself what, according to that standard, he ought to be and to do. Nay, where a law is enacted by the legislature, it is left with every man to settle with himself what it is which is thereby required of him as a subject of the empire,—under this condition, of course, that if he interpret it wrongly and act accordingly, he must abide the consequences. Proceeding on the analogy of these cases, we should be ready to infer that the same rule will hold concerning our relation to the Divine law as recorded in Scripture. Admitting the supreme authority of the record, it would seem to follow that each man must be left to decide for himself as to what truths it teaches, what duties it inculcates, what sanctions it unfolds; under a liability, of course, to all such disadvantages or penalties as may be the consequence of his deciding erroneously.



At this point the path of the Anglo-catholics diverges from that which most other sections of the protestant community profess to follow. In their opinion, the interpretation of Scripture cannot be safely left to the private judgment of each individual. They would, therefore, in the first instance, *prepossess* the mind with a systematic view of the truths which they conceive Scripture to contain, that in the light of these the varied, unsystematic and (as they deem them) obscure statements of the inspired writers may be justly explained. Instead of sending men to the Bible to form, each for himself, as he best can, his creed, they would first teach men a correct creed, and then send them, by that creed, to interpret and harmonize the words of the Bible. But they do not conceive the formation of such a creed to be a thing left to mere human judgment. They believe that at no time has the church been without the guidance of a Divinely constructed formula of religious faith and practice, older than the New Testament itself, recognized by the New Testament writers, and preserved in the traditionary records of the early church. To these records they refer, as furnishing us with the only authorized standard of Biblical interpretation.

The following extracts from their own publications will set this part of their opinions distinctly before the reader.

“ We do not appeal, in proof of Christian doctrine, to the ancient Christian writers, as in any way *infallible*. Our sentiments on this head are well known: they have been repeatedly explained. We hold, that the doctrine of any father, however great and learned he may have been, *e. g.* that of Augustine, Athanasius, Ambrose, or Basil, is to be *rejected* in any point where it contradicts Scripture. We consider all these writers as uninspired men, and therefore liable to mistakes and errors like other theologians. Therefore it involves a studied misrepresentation of our meaning and principle, when we are met by assertions or proofs, that particular fathers have taught errors in faith or morality; that they were credulous; that their writings are in some points obscure; that their criticisms or interpretations of Scripture are sometimes mistaken; that they invented scholastic doctrines, and were tinged with false philosophy; that the later fathers were better theologians than the earlier; that there are fathers against fathers, and councils against councils, on some points. This is all calculated merely to excite prejudice against an appeal to the doctrine of the church, by misrepresenting our design and principle in making it. Our answer to all these arguments is, that we do not appeal to the fathers as inspired and authoritative writers; but as competent witnesses of the faith held by Christians in their days. If they are not to be trusted in this, they are not to be trusted in their testimony to the facts of Christianity, and the external evidence of revelation is subverted.”¹

“ With relation to the supreme authority of inspired Scripture, it [the doctrine maintained by the Anglicans] stands thus:—Catholic tradition teaches revealed truth, Scripture proves it; Scripture is the document of Faith, tradition the witness of it; the true Creed is the catholic interpretation of Scripture, or scripturally proved tradition; Scripture by itself teaches mediately, and proves decisively; tradition by itself proves negatively, and teaches positively; Scripture and tradition taken together are the joint rule of faith.”²

The doctrine maintained in these extracts, viz., that the traditionary teaching of the early church is

¹ Palmer's Treatise on the Church, vol. ii. p. 55.

² Tracts for the Times, No. 78, p. 2. See also Dr Pusey's Letter to the Bishop of Oxford, 2d edition, pp. 40, 41, where the author especially states the points of difference between Anglicans and Romanists regarding tradition.

to be revered, not, indeed, as if it could enable us to *dispense* with Scripture, or as if it were entitled to *stand on a par* with Scripture; but as the *fixed* and *authoritative interpreter* of Scripture, is one by no means peculiar to the party which has issued the Tracts for the Times. It is a doctrine to which many of the earlier Christian writers make sufficiently distinct reference, though it was reserved for Vincent of Lerins, a monk of the fifth century, to reduce it formally to the shape of a rule.¹ It was also distinctly recognized by the leading English reformers, as well as by many of the continental churches;² and not a few modern divines of the episcopal church, some of whom have even appeared as the antagonists of other parts of the Anglo-catholic systems, have given in their adherence to this.³

I am farther constrained to remark, that this doctrine seems to rest upon a principle which is widely embraced beyond the limits of the catholic party. The principle to which I allude is this, that a *formular*y of Christian doctrine is necessary as an *authoritative standard* of religious opinion. The

¹ See APPENDIX, Note D.

² See APPENDIX, Note E.

³ Among the rest, the Rev. G. S. Faber. See his work on the Primitive Doctrine of Election, pp. 11, 13, and 184; and his more recent volume, entitled, "Our Lord's Discourse at Capernaum fatal to the Popish doctrine of Transubstantiation," p. 12 ff. For the sentiments of many of the leading English episcopalians, from Bishop Jewell downwards, on the union of tradition with Scripture as a rule of faith, see the *Catena Patrum*, in the 78th Tract for the Times.

meaning of this assertion is, that our religious views ought to be adjusted according to a certain fixed model, in which what is deemed to be truth is articulately set forth. Now, wherever this principle is held, it must follow as a necessary consequence, that as this standard is presupposed to contain the truths which are in Scripture, the statements of Scripture must be understood so as to tally with the dogmas of the standard. If this consequence be repudiated, and a claim be advanced for each man to form his opinions for himself from Scripture, the use of the formulary, as a standard of opinion, must be relinquished; otherwise, a man might be bound to a certain set of opinions, and yet not bound to them at one and the same time. But if a creed is to influence our judgments in the interpretation of Scripture, the only controversy that can be agitated between us and the catholics, respects the *particular creed* by which we shall consent to bind our minds. We must not, in that case, ask, Why may we not learn what Scripture teaches at once and directly from Scripture itself, instead of first learning it from a confession, a catechism, or a creed? but, *Which* is to be preferred, this creed or that? The controversy is thus one merely of detail, and not of principle. As, indeed, it has been sometimes formally stated, it is merely a question between the formularies of the ante-Nicene church and the formularies of the Reformation,—between Rome and

Wittenberg,—between Augustine and Luther,—between the Council of Nice, the Diet of Augsburg, and the Assembly of Divines at Westminster. In short, it is no longer, in this case, for the right of every man to judge for himself from Scripture what he ought to believe and do, that we must contend; but only for liberty, among a host of teachers claiming authority over our judgments, to follow implicitly the one whom accident or choice may have assigned to us.

I must confess, that were the controversy with the Anglo-catholics, concerning tradition, restricted to these terms, it would not be one on which I should much care to enter. For one thing, the preponderating advantage would, in such a case, seem to be too much on their side, both in the ground which they assume, and in the preliminary probability that their rule of faith is the true one. A rule which is recommended to us, not simply on the ground of the wisdom, learning, or piety of its authors; but on the ground, that it forms part of that which was once delivered to the saints, must be allowed on all hands to be far less offensive in its claims, than one which is avowedly the composition of fallible men like ourselves. And when we must determine on the guide to whom we shall submit, anterior to any examination for ourselves of his claims as compared with those of others, (which would be to exercise the forbidden right of private judgment,) every one

must feel that there is immensely greater security in following the authority of the universal church during the earlier centuries of its existence, than that of men who viewed truth only from the point of their own individual convictions, prejudices, and interests. Besides, it is really hardly worth one's while to spend much strength or effort on such a controversy. It is but a poor thing at best to contend for liberty to enslave one's self to one master rather than another. It is only when we contend for the right of guiding ourselves without a master, that the controversy becomes worth the effort which is necessary to carry it on. This right I believe to be the inalienable privilege of all men—not to be wrested from them by others, not to be relinquished by themselves. On every one to whom God has given the boon of a Bible, he has laid the obligation to search that book *for himself*; and, whilst he repudiates no aid that the learning or piety of others can furnish, to take heed that he be satisfied in his own mind, that whatever he receives as true is authorised by its dictates. The Bible, honestly interpreted by such light as God in his grace may give us, is the only standard to which we should consent to appeal—the only standard to which, believing in the inspiration of Scripture, we should feel ourselves at liberty to appeal. By interposing between us and this standard the authoritative teaching of tradition, catholicism commands us as it were to look

at the light, not simply with such eyes as God has given us, but through the medium of some painted window—venerable, it may be, for its antiquity, beautiful for its art, and “dim with religious light,” yet a mere painted window after all. Here, as it seems to me, is an encroachment upon man’s personal liberty of thought. Here is a principle assumed, which, wherever it is held, appears to be fraught with evil. Against such a principle, therefore, I feel it worth while to contend, and that anxiously and earnestly, as for all that is most dear to man as an intelligent and accountable being.

The train of reasoning by which the Anglo-catholics endeavour to support their views of tradition, may be summarily stated as follows:—The apostles, as the first teachers of Christianity, announced it to men orally, in the shape of a creed or system of doctrines. This they committed to the bishops and presbyters of the churches, as a sacred deposit, to be used by them for the same purpose, as well as a test of all doctrines claiming to be Christian; and this, or at least “invaluable fragments” of it, we still possess, in the remains of the early church. Now, as the Scriptures of the New Testament were all addressed to churches whose members had been taught these creeds, and were indeed composed upon this assumption, it follows, that before we can place ourselves in the same position with the members of

these churches, so as to understand the New Testament as they understood it, we must adopt the same course which they followed; and having first duly imbued our minds with the doctrines of the primitive creed, proceed to study the New Testament in the light which these emit.

This, so far as I am aware, is a fair statement of the substance of their reasoning on this head. It must be allowed to be not without the appearance of considerable force—an appearance which can be dissipated only by a searching examination of the different propositions of which it is composed. To attempt this I now proceed, taking the questions of a purely historical kind first. We shall thus be better prepared for entering upon the inference deduced from the facts assumed, and on which, as I have already intimated, the main interest of this question turns.

SECTION I.

FORM OF THE APOSTOLIC TEACHING.

It is assumed by the traditionists, that the original form in which the apostles delivered the truths of Christianity to men, was that of a creed. Let us examine the grounds on which this assumption rests.

I pass over all that has been said respecting the

a priori probability that such a plan was that followed by the apostles; for in such a case I cannot but regard an appeal to antecedent probabilities as at best but a very precarious and unsatisfactory mode of procedure. The conclusion at which a person arrives on such an appeal depends very much upon the character of his own mind, and the point from which he views the subject; so that what appears to one man highly probable, may to another appear hardly conceivable, in the case supposed. Besides, founding on the supposition, which is common to both parties in this controversy, that the teaching of the apostles was the work of God, it must be allowed by all sober thinkers that we are very incompetent to say, abstracting from the actual facts of the case, in what form it is probable and in what it is not probable that this teaching would be delivered. We can never know by anticipation in what way God *will do* any act; we can only, after the fact, by humble study of his works, tell how he *has done* it. It is idle, then, in such a case, to waste time in calculating the probabilities of the teaching of the apostles having been presented in the form of a creed.

Passing from the region of purely antecedent probability, and founding upon the actual nature of the revelation communicated, it is argued that we have the strongest reason for concluding that a religious system, consisting of a set of doctrines, would be

conveyed to men in the first instance in a dogmatical form. Now, here again I might object to the impalpable and evanescent character of the argument; for where is the standard by which the force of this conclusion is to be estimated? Is it not possible that the very reasons which induced the apostles to convey truth in an unsystematic form in their *written* teaching may have availed to produce the same effect on their *spoken* teaching? and may it not, therefore, be said with equal plausibility, that we have the strongest reason to believe that the apostles did *not* deliver their first message in a dogmatical form? Such reasonings serve no good purpose either on one side or the other. They make the question turn, as it were, on a hinge that moves both ways, so as effectually to prevent either party from shutting out the other from the conclusion at which he wishes to arrive? But happily there is a more satisfactory way of meeting this argument. It proceeds, it will be observed, on the assumption that the religion of Jesus Christ is a revelation from God *of a set of doctrines* which men are to receive and hold. This position I venture to call in question. What God reveals to us in the Bible, as the substance and basis of our faith, is, strictly speaking, a set of *facts*, not a set of *doctrines*. The fallen condition of man—the incarnation of Deity in the person of Jesus Christ—the obedience unto death of this mysterious person as a sacrifice for the sins of man

—his resurrection and ascension to glory—his acceptance on our behalf by God—the offer of free and full pardon through the merits of his death—the gift of the Holy Spirit—His work in sanctifying the heart of man and preparing us for heaven—the resurrection of the body—the last judgment, and an eternity of rewards and punishments; are just so many facts of which we have a knowledge, not by any process of reasoning upon abstract principles, but simply by believing the testimony which God has been pleased to give regarding them. But if our religion be a religion of facts, and if it be by the belief and practical realization of these facts as facts, that we obtain the benefits which that religion offers, what comes of the argument founded upon the nature of Christianity as a supposed religion of doctrines in favour of the opinion that the apostles must have announced that religion in the shape of a creed? Why should persons who had only a few great facts to announce to men, have done any thing else than tell men these facts, demonstrate the authority upon which they were announced, and press them upon the attention of their hearers as matters in which they were deeply interested? Nor is this all. Experience amply teaches us, that no sooner do men come to regard a religious truth in the light of a mere doctrine, and not in that of a substantially existing fact, than they cease to be in any salutary manner, or to any great extent, influenced by it.

How many, for instance, willingly admit and defend the *doctrine* of the Divine existence, who, in every possible manner, are all the while showing that the *fact* of the Divine existence has no place whatever in their minds, and no hold whatever over their conduct! The same thing is exemplified in regard to all the other truths of religion. Now, seeing this, would not the apostles have been unfaithful to their trust, and unwise for their professed object, if, instead of laying before men the ever-living and all-constraining facts of their message, they had only taught them the stiff and dry details of a doctrinal creed? It must be obvious that, taking this view of the matter, which I maintain is the only correct one, the probabilities are all against the allegation, that the teaching of the apostles was exhibited in the form of a systematic statement of mere doctrinal principles.

When, from these general reasonings, we come to such actual historical notices of the preaching of the apostles as have come down to us, the view I have just expressed is most fully borne out. Let us look, for instance, at the account which the apostle Paul gives of his first preaching to the Corinthians, as recorded in the commencement of the fifteenth chapter of his first epistle to that church:—"Moreover, brethren," says he, "I declare unto you the gospel *which I preached unto you*, which also ye received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved,

if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep," &c., ver. 1—8. Here we have Paul's own account of what he taught the Corinthians; and of what, I ask, did his preaching consist but of a simple statement of facts and of the evidence upon which they were worthy to be received? And for what purpose did the apostle state these facts? Was it merely to interest the feelings and to enlarge the conceptions of those who had *already* embraced the doctrines of Christianity? No; Paul himself expressly states, that he thus preached to them that they, *by retaining in their memories what they heard, might be saved*. If Paul's authority, then, in this matter, is to be allowed that weight which is its due, we must admit that, in his case at least, apostolic teaching was not the deliverance of a creed, but the publishing of the facts concerning the life and death of Christ,—those facts which comprise "the gospel," and of which we have the record in the Scriptures of the New Testament. But what is thus true of Paul must be true

also of all the other apostles; for as they had received one commission, and were under the guidance of one and the same Spirit, and had entrusted to them one and the same message, it would be preposterous to suppose that any substantial difference could exist as to the manner in which they would discharge the duties of their office. All the notices, moreover, which we have of their public addresses in the Acts of the Apostles and in their Epistles, tend to the conclusion that, like Paul's, their preaching consisted of a statement of facts, and that if they urged principles of doctrine or duty upon their disciples, it was rather in the shape of *inferences* from the facts already received, than in that of primary truths, in the light of which these facts themselves were to be considered and comprehended.¹

For this first assumption, then, on which the doctrine of the traditionists rests, I do not see that they possess the shadow of evidence. On the contrary, all the evidence we have goes to establish a directly opposite conclusion, by confirming us in the opinion that the preaching of the apostles was, like their writings, an unsystematic detail of the facts of Christianity, with continued practical applications of these to the circumstances and necessities of their hearers. This is as might have been supposed; for it would

¹ Compare the account of Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 14—36, and his address to the people in the temple, Acts iii. 12—26. See also 2 Pet. i. 12—18; 1 John v. 10—13.

be strange indeed had the apostles, in their extempore discourses, been formal and dogmatic, while, in their written treatises, they followed a free style of address, partly narrative, partly inferential, and partly practical.

SECTION II.

ALLEGED EXISTENCE OF A SYMBOLICAL STANDARD IN THE APOSTOLIC CHURCHES.

The *second* assumption on which the inference of the traditionists rests is, that there actually did exist a formulary of Christian doctrine in the primitive churches, by which all opinions of a religious nature were to be tried, and which formed the religious standard and guide of these communities. That such a formula existed, it is affirmed, cannot be denied, inasmuch as distinct allusions are made to it in the apostolic writings. The passages chiefly referred to as containing such allusions are the following:—1 Tim. vi. 20, “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust,” (τὴν παρακαταθήκην, the deposit,) &c.; 2 Tim. i. 13, 14, “Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed to thee keep by the Holy Spirit that dwelleth in us;” 1 Tim. vi. 12, “Fight

the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses;" 2 John 10, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." From these passages it is argued that there was in the early churches some statement of doctrines which went by the name of "the form of sound words," or "the deposit,"—that this was committed to the first preachers, to be by them taught to their hearers,—and that this was professed by these preachers, before competent witnesses, at their ordination to office. Whether these inferences from the passages quoted be correct or not, can be ascertained only by a careful examination of each passage by itself.

And, *first*, with regard to the good deposit which was entrusted to Timothy, and which he was charged by Paul to keep through the Holy Ghost. "This," says Mr Keble,¹ "was the treasure of apostolical doctrines and church rules,—the rules and doctrines which make up the charter of Christ's kingdom;" and in support of this, he argues at considerable length, that such must be the meaning of the words in this connection, partly because the apostle so urgently commands Timothy to "hold it fast," but chiefly because it is placed by the apostle in opposi-

¹ Sermon, p. 20.

tion to "vain and profane babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so called."

With regard to the former of these reasons, it may suffice to remark, that it becomes of weight solely on the supposition, that a set of doctrines and rules formally drawn up and disposed into a creed, is the *only* thing in the shape of religious instruction which Timothy could be enjoined to keep or hold fast. But why so? May not an unsystematic detail of facts and principles, such as we find in the written Scriptures, be kept by us as well as a creed? May not the great fact, that salvation is solely through the atonement of Christ, be held by us without forming one of the articles of a symbolical formulary? And may not all that the apostle (supposing him to speak of truths, which, as I shall presently endeavour to show, is by no means certain,) means to enjoin upon Timothy, be simply the faithful retention of a pure gospel, an uncorrupted announcement of "the glad tidings of great joy which are unto all people?"

What confirms this remark is, that Paul uses the same expression in enjoining upon the Corinthians the faithful retention of the gospel which he had declared to them, and which, as we have already seen, consisted in the great leading facts concerning our Saviour's death and resurrection.

As to the latter of these reasons, I shall consider it first on the admission that there *is* such an antithesis in the apostle's statement between the deposit

committed to Timothy, and the profane and vain babblings against which he cautions him, as Mr Keble's argument supposes. For this purpose we must suppose, that the objects contrasted belong to the same order of things, though of a different class in that order; in other words, that both belong to the order of things *taught*, but that the one consisted of truth, the other of falsehood. Now, admitting for the sake of argument, that such is the case, it does not appear to me to follow necessarily from such a contrast that the former is a set of doctrines and rules put together in the form of a creed. Can nothing, I ask, be set over against "profane and vain babblings," except the dogmatical announcements of a creed? How was it, for instance, that Paul himself met those heretical doctrines which had crept into the churches of Galatia, Colosse, and Corinth? or that John encountered those which at a later period were found in the very churches of which Timothy at this time had the charge? Was it not by a process of reasoning and deduction from the fundamental facts of Christianity? And if this was found the most suitable weapon in the hands of these apostles, is it not at least probable that it is the same which the former of them in this passage recommends his disciple Timothy to use? This leads to the conclusion that the deposit here referred to, was simply the gospel,—the glad news concerning the incarnation, life, and death of the Son of God. Of this the

apostle himself says elsewhere, that it had been *committed* to him;¹ and I see nothing in the language used by him to Timothy to forbid a similar interpretation here.

This is on the assumption that we *must* view “the deposit” in this passage as relating to what Timothy was enjoined to teach. For my own part, however, I greatly prefer the interpretation which explains this word as referring to *persons* and not to *truths*, and which views the apostle as enjoining upon Timothy, not so much a careful preservation of pure doctrine, as a watchful anxiety for the salvation of the *flock* entrusted to his charge. In support of this interpretation, I observe, *first*, That it is that to which the proper meaning of the word used naturally leads. The word in question means *anything entrusted to a person by one who may resume the trust when he pleases*. So it is used, for instance, in the LXX translation of Lev. vi. 2, where, in the words of our version, it is said, “If a soul sin and lie unto his neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep,” (τὰ πρὸς τὸν πλησίον ἐν παραθήκῃ); and again, in verse 4,—“He shall restore that which was delivered to him to keep,” &c. Here the word plainly means something committed to a person’s use for a time, with the intention of its being required again at that per-

¹ Gal. ii. 7; Tit. i. 3.

son's hands.¹ This being the meaning of the word, it is obvious that it could with infinitely greater propriety be used of a number of Christian souls entrusted to Timothy by the great Head of the church, to be trained for glory, honour, and immortality, that so Christ might receive his own at his coming, than of a formula of doctrine which Timothy had received to teach, and which could in no sense be *given back* to him from whom it was received. *Secondly*, In the immediate context of one of the passages under examination, this very word is used in a connection which plainly excludes the idea of a set of truths, and necessitates that of a person. "I know," says Paul, "in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed to him, (παράβηκην μου), against that day."² Now, what was it that Paul had deposited with Christ?—a set of doctrines and church rules? No, assuredly, but the well-being of his own soul. This was what the apostle had placed in the keeping of that faithful Saviour whom he elsewhere describes as

¹ The same idea is conspicuous in the usage of the term by the classical writers, as may be seen from the examples collected by Stephanus in his Thesaurus, *sub voc.* Hesychius and Suides explain the word by ἐνίσχυσον, *a pledge*. The passages collected by Stephanus also show how frequently the word was employed by the classical writers in reference to *persons*. Plato, for instance, speaks of "orphans as a very great and most sacred deposit." De Legg. xi. p. 927, C.

² 2 Tim. i. 12. See Whitby's instructive note on this passage.

“the Shepherd and Bishop of souls.” But if this be the meaning of the word as employed by the apostle concerning himself, is it not using unjustifiable freedom with his style to suppose that in the very next verse but one he should, in speaking of that with which Timothy had been entrusted, employ the same word in a meaning so totally different? Shall we not rather say, that the idea in Paul’s mind was this, that as Jesus Christ, like a true and faithful Shepherd, would keep every soul committed to his care, so it behoved his servants, as under shepherds of his flock, to keep with constant and conscientious fidelity, that portion of it entrusted to them?¹ *Thirdly*, This interpretation agrees better with the context than the other. In the former of the two

¹ Compare the use of the word here rendered “deposit,” with the use of it by Eusebius in that exquisite story of the apostle John and the robber, contained in the twenty-third chapter of the third book of his Church History. “‘Come,’ said the apostle to the bishop, to whom he had entrusted the care of the youth who had turned robber, ‘return to us *the deposit*, (τὴν παρακαταθήκην,) committed to thee, O bishop, by the Saviour and me, as the church over which thou presidest can attest.’ At this demand the bishop was struck with amazement, supposing some one had represented him to the apostle as receiving money which he had not received, and being neither able to account for what he had not, nor willing to discredit John. When, however, the latter said, ‘It is the young man and the soul of my brother I demand of thee,’ the old man groaned, and weeping, replied, ‘He is dead.’ ‘How and by what death?’ asked John. ‘He is dead to God,’ was the reply. . . . Then the apostle, rending his garment, and smiting his head, with a mighty wail exclaimed, ‘Truly to an excellent keeper (φύλακα) of the soul of my brother have I left him,’” &c. The close resemblance between the language here used and that of Paul to Timothy, cannot fail to strike every reader.

passages in which it occurs, (1 Tim. vi. 20,) it follows close upon a warm exhortation to Timothy, to be faithful to those who were placed under his care, especially "charging the rich not to be high-minded, nor to trust in the things of earth; but to lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come; that they might lay hold on eternal life." After such an admonition, what more natural, than that Paul should conclude his epistle with an earnest entreaty to Timothy to be faithful to his trust, and to keep the flock committed to him? On the other hand, what more unlikely than that he should follow up such an admonition with a command to keep pure the creed which he had received to teach? It is true, that close upon this Paul exhorts Timothy to "avoid profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called." But why were these to be avoided? Obviously, because, as the apostle himself adds, some, by "professing these, had erred concerning the faith." It was to prevent the risk of any apostatizing from Christianity, therefore, that Timothy was to avoid these babblings and oppositions of science; in other words, it was, that he might keep his flock from being scattered, injured, or lost. Does not all this go to confirm the idea, that the deposit intrusted to him was not a set of doctrines, but the souls of those who looked to him as their spiritual teacher, and of whom he would

have to give account at last to the great Proprietor of the whole? With regard to the latter of the two passages, in which this word occurs, viz. 2 Tim. i. 14, I have already said, that the use of the word immediately before by the apostle, in reference to his own spiritual interest, renders it extremely probable that it is in reference to objects of the same class that it is used here. This conclusion is further favoured by the circumstance, that in the next verse Paul proceeds to refer to some cases of apostasy which had occurred among the professed disciples of Christ, — a reference which seems very natural, on the supposition, that by “the good deposit” mentioned in the preceding verse, Paul means the flock of which Timothy was shepherd; but which produces a somewhat forced transition, if by that we are to understand the creed which Timothy had to teach. All this, however, it may be said, is more than counterbalanced by the words of the 13th verse, where we read, “Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus;” after which immediately follows the admonition now under consideration. From this conjunction it is concluded, that “the good deposit” was none other than the “form of sound of words,” which “form,” it is also concluded, was none other than the creed which Paul had taught Timothy. This is, at best, but precarious reasoning. Granting for the moment,

that the form of sound words here mentioned, was a system of truth, how does it follow, that the good deposit was the same? Is it customary with the apostle thus unnecessarily to *repeat* his injunctions? On the contrary, does not the circumstance, that after enjoining upon Timothy to hold fast the form of sound words, the apostle deems it necessary to command him *also* to keep the deposit, naturally lead to the inference, that the latter is something different from the former? At any rate, this conclusion is as probable as the other, so that no solid argument can be drawn from the mere juxtaposition of these verses, in favour of the catholic interpretation of the latter of them.

It still remains, that we enquire particularly what is meant by the phrase, "the form of sound words," which Paul enjoins upon Timothy to keep. In the preceding observations I have, for argument's sake, proceeded on the assumption, that by this phrase is intended a formulary of doctrine, for the purpose of showing, that even on that supposition it would not follow that the good deposit afterwards mentioned means the same. This phrase, however, is adduced, not only for the purpose of explaining the other, but also as affording an independent evidence of the existence, in the apostolic churches, of a creed, with which the bishops were entrusted, that they might keep it and teach it to all. On this I have simply to remark, that its whole weight, as an argument,

rests on the assumption, that the word rendered in our version by *form*, is equivalent to *formulary* or *symbol*. Were this the case, the passage would unquestionably show that there did exist in the apostolic churches some synopsis of Christian doctrine, which was familiarly known as the formulary of sound words. Before this can be granted, however, two difficulties must be surmounted by those who maintain the affirmative side of the question. The former of these is the absence of the article before ὑποτύπωσιν, the word translated “form” in our version, a circumstance quite irreconcilable, I think, with the assumption, that by this phrase is intended *the* formulary of doctrine in the apostolic churches.¹ The latter is, that the word ὑποτύπωσις nowhere occurs with the meaning which would thus be affixed to it. It is found only once besides in the New Testament, in 1 Tim. i. 16, where the apostle says, that he himself was set forth as a *pattern* or *specimen* of the long-suffering of God, for the benefit of those who should afterwards believe. This seems to be the proper meaning of the word; and in this sense there are two interpretations which may be given to the passage under notice. The one is, that Timothy was always to have before him a model or

¹ It may perhaps be said, that the article lies virtually in the relative ἧν, and is by it thrown back on its antecedent. True; but what *is* its antecedent? Not ὑποτύπωσιν, but λόγων. So that the proper rendering is, not “*the* form of sound words which,” &c.; but “*a* form of *the* sound words which,” &c.

conception of that sound teaching which the apostle had instilled into him. The other is, that he was always to exhibit a pattern, in his own personal conduct, of the wholesome effects of the truths which he had learned from the apostle, and which he himself taught to others. The former of these interpretations, is that given by Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Theodoret, and adopted by Heinrichs and others among modern interpreters.¹ The latter is favoured by the parallel expression in Rom. vi. 18, where the "type," or form "of doctrine," (τύπος διδασκαλίας,) seems to mean the model prescribed by the doctrine which had been taught, and into conformity with which the true Christian is moulded.² Without, however, pausing to determine between these two interpretations, it is sufficient to observe, that neither of them affords any solid support to the argument built by catholics on this passage. If we take the latter, the allusion of the apostle is not to doctrine at all, but to personal conduct. If we prefer the former, though we shall regard the apostle as alluding to doctrine, it is to doctrine *as conceived of in the mind*, and that for the purpose of serving as a *model* on which to frame a system of instruction, not as embodied in a creed to be used as a *standard* of faith and conduct; in other words, that the disciple, in communicating instruction to others, should have a

¹ See APPENDIX, Note F.

² See Calvin and Grotius on this passage.

lively conception before his mind of the wholesome words he had himself heard from his preceptor in Christ. It is obvious, that to keep this, no more means necessarily to retain a formulary of doctrine, than to preach after the model of any distinguished minister of the gospel, means necessarily to repeat his discourses.

I come now to the last of the passages alleged from the Epistles to Timothy, to prove the existence of a creed in the apostolic churches, that, viz., in which Paul reminds his disciple of the good profession which he had made before many witnesses. This "good confession," says Mr Keble, "can only mean the apostle's creed, or some corresponding formula recited at baptism."¹ But why so? Can "a good confession" mean nothing else than the repetition of a creed? And is it only at baptism that a man can make such a confession before many witnesses? In Timothy's case, this latter supposition is peculiarly unfortunate, for, so far as we know anything about him, he was never baptised at all, unless it was in his infancy. But on this point I need not farther dilate, for Paul, in this case also, as in the preceding cases, has most providentially so used the phrase rendered "good profession," in the context, as to show, that it cannot mean a creed. At verse 13th, he speaks of Jesus Christ as having "witnessed

¹ Sermon, p. 16.

a good confession before Pontius Pilate." Will Mr Keble stand to his explanation here? Will he say, that this can mean nothing else than some creed or formula, recited by our Saviour before Pilate? Or if this be felt to be too absurd, will he tell us how he is so confident, that the very same phrase used in the verse immediately preceding, must mean a creed or formula recited by Timothy? To an unbiassed reader, the expression would naturally appear to bear the same meaning in both cases. In the case of our Lord, beyond all question, the reference of the apostle is to that avowal which he made of himself as the King of Zion before Pilate, and which he made "good," by dying in vindication of his claims. Taken in connection with this, there seems little room to doubt, that the profession to which Paul alludes in the case of Timothy, was simply his avowal of himself as a missionary of the cross, and a servant of Jesus. This he had made before many witnesses. It was good in itself; and the apostle would have him prove it good, in relation to his own motives and character, by the faithful and persevering discharge of those duties which the office he had thus assumed entailed upon him. Such an injunction is surely far more worthy of the character of both parties, than if we were to understand the apostle as speaking of a creed which Timothy was to remember that he had once on a time recited.

It has often, I must say, struck my mind with

some degree of surprise, that those who regard the passages just considered as referring to some formula of doctrine with which Timothy had been instructed, should not have felt the incongruity of such an interpretation under the circumstances of the case. To retain such a formula in his memory, and to keep it entire and pure, was surely no such *difficult* duty to an intelligent and upright man, as to require to be so frequently and so urgently enjoined upon him. In this point of view, how much more suitable to the character and relations of both parties is the supposition, that that to which Paul thus earnestly called the conscientious attention of his friend, was the care of the flock committed to his charge, and of his own conduct as a professed servant of Christ! "Who is sufficient for these things?" and in what way can the wisdom and the love of Christian friendship more appropriately show itself, than in exhorting those on whom such a charge has been laid, to be steadfast under those manifold difficulties and temptations to which they are exposed,—difficulties which the strongest cannot of himself surmount, and temptations under which the holiest and most devoted will sometimes sink? To my mind, this view of the apostle's design gives to his words a weight, a dignity, and an appropriateness, of which, by the others, they are totally deprived.

I come now to notice the only remaining passage on which the traditionists lay stress as affording evi-

dence of the existence in the apostolic churches of a creed. It is contained in the 10th verse of the Second Epistle of John, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God's speed." This, taken in connection with the injunctions to the Christians in the First Epistle concerning the abiding within them of that which they had heard from the beginning, (ch. ii. 24,) and the confession "that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," (chap. iv. 2, 3,) is viewed by the catholics as proving that "the church was already in possession of the substance of saving truth in a sufficiently systematic form by the sole teaching of the apostles."¹ If by this nothing more is meant than that the Christians to whom John wrote were already in possession, by means of oral instruction, of a measure of acquaintance with saving truth sufficient to bring them under the power of Christianity, and enable them to detect any false doctrines that might be taught among them, the inference is one from which it would be absurd to dissent. But, if the writer means to affirm that these passages in the Epistles of John authorise the conclusion, that the knowledge which the Christians addressed by him, possessed of saving truth, was embodied in the form of a creed which they recited at baptism, (and this his main argument requires

¹ Keble's Sermon, p. 23.

him to affirm,) it must be obvious to every candid reader that the basis is utterly inadequate to support the superstructure which he would thus erect upon it. A simple reference to the passages he has adduced will show that the apostle is writing concerning the plain elementary facts of the gospel,—the real humanity of our Lord, and all the other facts connected therewith,—not of such a systematic and formal arrangement of these facts and of the doctrines involved in them, as is found in a symbolical standard. If any shall hint that the mere general statements of the gospel cannot form such a standard of appeal as John here obviously has in view, I would remind them of what the apostle Paul says to the Galatians, “if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”¹ The gospel which Paul here constitutes the standard by which the Galatians were to try all other doctrines was, he tells them in the preceding verse, that which he had preached unto them. Now, what that was we have already seen. It was not a formal enunciation of dogmatical principles; it was a free narration of the events connected with the life and death of our Lord, with a statement of the meaning and intent of these. And if this was sufficient to form a standard of belief to the Galatians, why suppose it other than suffi-

¹ Chap. i. 8.

cient for the same purpose to those whom John addressed?

I have now gone through the examination of the scriptural evidence adduced in favour of the assumption, that the apostolic churches were in possession of a formal creed which they used as a standard of religious sentiment, and have shown, I trust, that that assumption is not borne out by the passages adduced in support of it. A few general remarks in farther support of the negative side of this question, shall conclude this section.

1. We find from the sacred writings that, on the reception of a convert into the church, the profession of faith required of him was of the briefest and most informal character. It consisted in nothing more than an acknowledgment that Jesus was the Christ the Saviour of the world.¹ Less than this it was impossible to ask, unless individuals had been received into the church without any profession whatever; and more than this there is no evidence that there was in any case required. The ground on which the apostles received men into the churches over which they presided was that of *their simple Christianity*. If they understood enough of divine truth to enable them to say sincerely that they believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, they knew enough for salvation and enough for the enjoyment

¹ Compare Matt. xvi. 16; Acts viii. 37; 1 John iv. 2, 3, &c.

of Christian fellowship. A profession of this, therefore, was all that was demanded of them; and so far as any information we possess serves to show, they seem to have made such a profession each in his own words and after his own form. It would not, perhaps, be safe to conclude from this, that *no* stated formula of profession existed in the apostolic churches; but it must be admitted that, supposing such to have existed, it is altogether unaccountable that no instance should be recorded of its having been used, whilst in every instance where we might have expected it to have been used a mere extempore and informal confession alone was made.

2. If there was a creed in the apostolic churches which all were taught, and by which scripture itself was to be explained, is it not strange that such a document should never have been committed to writing, or preserved to us in an authoritative form? If, without such a creed, scripture be unintelligible, or liable to dangerous misconception, it seems as if, in preserving to us scripture, whilst that which alone can enable us to understand scripture has been allowed to perish, the great Head of the church has acted unkindly by his followers. He has, on this supposition, placed them in the position of persons who have a chart sufficient indeed to guide them through the mazes of their journey, but to whom this advantage has been rendered nearly worthless by their being denied the light in which alone that

chart can be easily or correctly perused,—a conclusion derogatory alike to his wisdom and to his grace.

That no creed is now extant justly claiming to be regarded as the composition of the apostles, is a fact too well known to require to be proved. What goes commonly under the title of the apostles' creed has no demonstrable antiquity higher than the end of the fourth century or the beginning of the fifth. It is mentioned for the first time in one of the writings of Ruffinus, presbyter at Aquileia, who died somewhere about the year 410, and though he tells the story of its having been prepared by the apostles at Jerusalem before they separated to preach the gospel in different countries, yet he at the same time adduces this not as his own conviction, but as a probable tradition of his predecessors. What degree of weight is to be attached to this assertion of Ruffinus may be inferred from the circumstance, that no allusion to this creed is made by any of the Fathers of the first four centuries, not even Eusebius, whose careful assiduity in mentioning all the genuine remains of the apostles is well known. There can be little doubt but that the creed was manufactured in Rome, and having been given forth as the *Symbolum Apostolicum*, or formula of apostolic doctrine, the story of Ruffinus was got up, either from a misapprehension of the meaning of this title, or because such a title formed a convenient cover under which such a fine story could be palmed on the multitude.

The Romish origin of the creed is attested not only by its being continually called, by the Fathers, *Symbolum Romanum*,¹ but also by the frequently attested fact, that it was the *peculiar* possession of the Romish church, and by the indignant exclamation of the Greek bishops at the council of Florence, when the authority of this creed was urged on them as apostolic; “we neither have, nor do we know any creed of the apostles.”²

If, then, there be no document extant entitled to claim the honours of a creed of apostolic authorship, the traditionists seem to me to be reduced to the alternative, of either relinquishing their position that such a creed existed in the primitive church, or of maintaining that the gift of the Scriptures, apart from that which can alone explain them, is little better than a mockery of our wants. I know of no way by which they can escape from this dilemma, but by maintaining that though we have not the whole primitive creed, we have, in the remains of

¹ “Credatur symbolo apostolorum, quod ecclesia Romana intemperatum semper custodit et servat.” Ambrosii, ep. 81. “Roma, et antequam Nicena synodus conveniret, a temporibus apostolorum usque ad nunc ita fidelibus symbolum tradidit.” Vigili Thapsens. adv. Eutychem, lib. iv.

² ἡμῖς οὔτε ἔχομεν, οὔτε εἶδομεν σύμβολον τῶν Ἀποστόλων. Ap. Suiceri Thes. Eccles., in v. σύμβολον. On the subject of the Apostles' creed the reader may consult with advantage this article by Suicer, King's History of the Creed, Lond. 1702; Tentzelii Exercitationes Selectae, Lips. 1692. Exercit. I. Walchii Antiquitates Symbolicae, Jen. 1772.

the early church, as Mr Keble tell us, “not a few very precious and sacred fragments”¹ of it. How far this assertion is historically correct will form subject of immediate inquiry; in the mean time, let the reader observe in what position Mr Keble, by ad-ducing it, puts himself. He tells us, that to the primitive churches was given an authoritative standard of divine knowledge, without which scripture is not intelligible; but he admits that so little care was exercised in the preservation of this, that it now exists only in fragments scattered over the wide surface of the remains of the Christian writers of the first six centuries. Now, both of these positions can scarcely be true. If a whole creed was necessary for the primitive Christians, it is no less necessary for us. If only “fragments” of that creed remain, something of that must be lost without which scripture cannot be fully understood; without which, therefore, Christianity cannot be fully taught, nor the church fully edified. What shall we say to these things? Can we suppose, for a moment, that such things are true? Shall we say that our Saviour has been unfaithful to his own promises to his church? What else *can* we say if he thus has allowed to perish part (and who knows how much?) of that without which the church cannot receive its necessary sup-

¹ Sermon, p. 32.

plies of spiritual food? Let Mr Keble take his choice. He must either impeach the love and veracity of his Master, or he must give up his assertion, that there was an authoritative standard of Christian doctrine and biblical interpretation in the primitive churches.

3. I observe, in conclusion, that the existence of an apostolic creed in the first age of the Christian church is a mere hypothesis of later disputants. No such thing is mentioned by the early Fathers, all whose appeals are made directly to scripture in support of what they advance; a circumstance which could not have occurred had they grown up under the discipline which the use of an authoritative creed common to all Christians would impose.

The same thing is evident from the fact, that many of the early Fathers, both in addressing friends, and in their controversies with the heretics or the heathen, have gone to the trouble of composing creeds or summaries of divine truth, each for himself, and all differing more or less from each other.¹ This was plainly a work of very idle supererogation, nay, of very self-sufficient presumption on the part of these Fathers if there was already extant an authorised creed of apostolic authorship. Such a docu-

¹ Vide Ignatii Ep. ad Trall. c. 9; Justin. Mart. Apol. I. p. 11, ed. Thirlb.; Ibid. p. 30, 31; Apol. II. p. 114, 115; Irenaei adv. Haer. i. 10; Ib. iii. 4; Tertulliani de Virginibus Velandis, c. 1; Adv. Praxean, c. 2; De Praescript. Haeret. c. 13; Origen. Praef. in Opus de Originibus, § 4.

ment must, of course, have been infinitely preferable, both for accuracy and authority, to any they could frame for themselves; and (especially in their conflicts with heretics) it is impossible to conceive a greater or more gratuitous relinquishment of a fair controversial advantage, than for them to substitute for what must have carried *divine* authority with it, a statement of their own, which, being their own, could carry with it no authority to which an antagonist would be disposed for a moment to yield. So convincing is this fact in reference to the subject now under consideration, that Du Pin, catholic though he was, considers it decisive of the question at issue. "In the second and third ages of the church," says he, "we find as many symbols as authors, and even the same author announces the symbol differently in different parts of his works; a clear evidence that there was not at that time a symbol which was believed to be of apostolic origin, nor even any authoritative and established formula of belief at all."¹

On the whole, therefore, we may affirm that the assertion of the existence, in the primitive church, of an authoritative creed derived from the teaching of the apostles, is one utterly unsupported by any competent historical evidence.

¹ Nouvelle Bibliotheque, tom. i. p. 10.

SECTION III.

USE AND AUTHORITY OF TRADITION AS PRESERVED
IN THE WRITINGS OF THE EARLY CHURCH.

The observations in the preceding section, if well founded, must be regarded as overturning the reasoning of the traditionists, in so far as it is dependant on the assumption of the existence and use of an authoritative symbol of doctrine in the apostolic churches. This might seem to render it unnecessary to extend our inquiry to their third position, in which they affirm the possibility of recovering from the remains of Christian antiquity the greater part, at least, of the creed supposed by them to have been given to the primitive Christians; for if there be no evidence that such a creed existed, it may appear preposterous to inquire whether any parts of it yet remain. As it is of importance, however, to show that in no part of their argument do they stand upon a solid basis, I shall now endeavour to prove that, even supposing an apostolic creed to have been possessed by the primitive churches, such a document can be nothing to us, having long since been irrecoverably lost. In other words, I shall now seek to show, that what Mr Keble calls the "very precious and sacred fragments of the unwritten teaching

of the first age of the church," have no substantial claim to be so regarded.

This inquiry is the more important from the fact that, apart from the hypothesis of an apostolic creed, the authority of these fragments may be urged upon us on the ground of their containing apostolic doctrine. It may be said that they contain the substance of what the apostles taught, in whatever form that teaching was conveyed; and that, in consequence of this, they are entitled to be received by us as authoritative guides in the formation of our religious opinions, and in the interpretation of scripture.

The reasoning on which this doctrine is advanced may be stated thus:—In the remains of the early church we perceive a wonderful harmony of opinion and statement on certain points of Christian doctrine and ritual. Fathers of different ages and countries; the confessions of different churches; the decrees of councils having no immediate connection with each other, are found to agree in maintaining exactly the same sentiments on certain important elements of sacred truth. In this consent of so many different parties, we have an assurance that the tenets consented to must have formed part of the apostolic doctrine, and consequently are furnished with a sufficient guarantee for regarding such tenets as certainly true, and certainly to be found in scripture.

It will be seen that this argument is simply an application of the rule of Vincent of Lerins already noticed in a former section. The examination of the soundness of it leads us necessarily to an inquiry into the degree of respect due to the writings of the ancient church in the formation of our religious views.

Now, to the fact assumed in this argument of an universal consent on certain points of Christian truth among the early Christian writers, I do not mean to demur. It is one which I think must be admitted; and it is one also which is well deserving of consideration on the part of all who are concerned to arrive at full and correct views of scriptural truth. It is true, on the other hand, that there are many points on which these writers differ, and these have been very sedulously collected by some, who appear to have thought that by so doing they were completely undermining the foundations of the traditionists. But this surely is labour in vain. Had the catholics maintained that *every thing* in the Fathers is true and divine, then the pointing out of differences of opinion among them would have been fatal to the dogma, for it would have landed those who maintained such a dogma on the horns of a dilemma, compelling them either to adopt the absurdity that two contradictory opinions could be both true, or to relinquish the ground which they had assumed as to the authority of the Fathers. But in truth, no such

ground has ever been assumed by them. All that they have maintained is, that where the Fathers *are agreed* we have in that agreement an evidence of the apostolic origin of the doctrine or institute which they concur in advocating. Now, that such agreement does exist among the Fathers on certain points cannot be doubted, and with this fact it is incumbent upon us to deal fairly, and to allow it such weight as it deserves.

It must be admitted farther, that to the writings of the Christian Fathers we stand indebted for very much that we venerate as useful, and indeed indispensable, in Christianity. There has been amongst protestants a great deal of foolish talking, and much jesting that is anything but convenient upon this subject. Men who have never read a page of the Fathers, and could not read one were they to try, have deemed themselves at liberty to speak in terms of scoffing and supercilious contempt of these venerable luminaries of the early church. Because Clement of Rome believed in the existence of the Phoenix, and because Justin Martyr thought the sons of God, who are said in Genesis to have intermarried with the daughters of men, were angels who for the loves of earth were willing to forego the joys of heaven, and because legends and old wives' fables enow are found in almost all the Fathers, it has been deemed wise to reject, despise, and ridicule the whole body of their writings. The least reflection

will suffice to show the unsoundness of such an inference. What should we say of one who, because Lord Bacon held many opinions which modern science has proved to be false, should treat the *Novum Organum* with contempt? or, of one who should deem himself entitled to scoff at Richard Baxter because in his *Saint's Rest* that able and excellent man tries to prove the existence of Satan by quoting instances of his apparitions and of his power over witches? There is no man, however good or great, that can get quite beyond the errors and credulities of his age. It becomes us, therefore, in dealing with the writings of a former generation, to take care that in rejecting the bad we do not also despise the good; and especially that we be not found availing ourselves of advantages which have reached us through the medium of these writings, whilst we ignorantly and ungratefully dishonour the memories of those by whom these writings were penned.

The obligations under which we as Christians lie to tradition may be briefly enumerated thus:—In the *first* place, we stand indebted to this source for the canon of sacred scripture. What books were considered sacred by the Jews, and what writings were left by the apostles and other inspired servants of Jesus Christ, we know only by the concurrent testimony of the Jewish and Christian writers of the early centuries of the Christian era. For this, therefore, which lies at the basis of all our reasonings in

support of the divine authority of scripture, we must ever acknowledge our deep obligations to these writers. *2dly*, We owe, in a majority of instances, to the Christian Fathers and to creeds of the early church the *form* in which the fundamental doctrines of our religion are held by us. In the Bible we find hardly any formal statements of doctrine. The truths which it unfolds to us are conveyed by general allusion, or as involved in certain facts, rather than by direct and systematic announcement. What we call the *doctrines* of Christianity are not so much parts themselves of the Bible, as expressions or announcements of the results which we obtain from the comparison, one part with another, of what the Bible states. God's part, strictly speaking, in the Bible is like his part in creation,—the unfolding to the view of his creatures certain great facts and phenomena belonging to himself and to his government. Man's part in theology is like man's part in philosophy,—to analyse and compare these phenomena so as to arrive at the general principle, doctrine, or law which is involved in them. As creation is divine whilst the philosophy that interprets it is human, so the Bible is divine whilst the theology that interprets it is human. When, therefore, I say that we are indebted to the records of the early church for many of the doctrines of our theology, I do not of course mean the *substance* of these doctrines but the *form* of them. Nor do I intend to convey the idea that, had these

records never been written, we should not have been able of ourselves to discover these doctrines in Scripture, any more than I would affirm that had Sir Isaac Newton never lived men would for ever have remained ignorant of the doctrine of gravitation. What I say is this, that just as we value the works of Newton and revere his name because, in point of fact, he was the man who put us in possession of the fact of gravitation in the shape of a doctrine or law of nature, so are we bound to respect the writings and honour the memories of the Christian Fathers because, in point of fact, they have been the first to put us in possession of certain facts of revelation in the shape of doctrines or laws of divine truth.

3dly, From the writings and usages of the early church we have obtained many institutions which are nowhere *expressly* prescribed in the New Testament; but which we find to be not only in accordance with its spirit, but implied at least in its statements, if not also sanctioned by apostolic usage. Such are the observance of the first day of the week as a day of public worship, the weekly observance of the Lord's supper, the ordinance of water-baptism, the manner of conducting our public worship, by praise, prayer, and preaching, and a few other things of the same note. Regarding these no man will, I think, affirm that they are *prescribed* in the New Testament. All that we can say concerning them is, that we can trace them up through the early church

to the days of the apostles; that in the writings of the apostles we do not only not find anything against them, but a great deal in their favour; and that, in respect of some of them, we have such authority as we are entitled to borrow from apostolic usage in support of them. For the first step of this process, however, we are obviously indebted to the Fathers, and in so far as their writings thus help us to the attainment of scriptural teaching on such points, they demand and deserve our respect. *Lastly*, To the writings of the Fathers we stand indebted for some of those standard interpretations of scripture which have been handed down from generation to generation, which are found in all the commentaries, and the truth and propriety of which strike the mind as soon as they are announced. I do not mean to affirm that these interpretations would *never* have been given had they not been first given by the Fathers; all that I say is, that, in point of fact, they *have* been first given by them,—that all subsequent critics have borrowed them from them,—and that, therefore, in so far as they are valuable and true, our gratitude is due, in the first instance, to those by whom they were first proposed. Nor is this all that may be affirmed on this head. In reading the homilies, and other expository discourses of the Fathers, we shall frequently find them *anticipating* opinions and interpretations of Scripture which have been thought the original discoveries of recent times, and for discover-

ing which certain writers have obtained considerable reputation amongst us. If justice were done to all parties in this matter, I suspect that it would be found, that as we owe some of our best hymns to unacknowledged translations from the Roman breviary, so some of the most favourite theological tenets of recent schools are to be found in the writings of the Fathers.

Let it be conceded, then, to the catholics, that, in these respects, we are under deep obligations to the early church, and that a certain degree of respect is due by us to the unanimous teaching of that church. The only question between us will then concern the *degree* of respect which we ought to pay to this. On this subject I shall first briefly state my own views, and then proceed to examine those of Dr Pusey and his followers.

Let us suppose, then, that we have ascertained that a given opinion was held, or a given institution observed everywhere, always, and by all in the early church, what effect should this knowledge produce upon us? Obviously, to create, in our minds, a *presumption* in favour of its apostolic origin. The fact of such an agreement amongst good and honest men, widely separated from each other, both in space and time, very decidedly points to a common source, as that from which their views had been derived by them; and as the source most obviously common to all was the teaching of the apostles, it is to be pre-

sumed, with some degree of probability, that the opinion or institute in question has the sanction of apostolic authority. It is for us, therefore, to go to the recorded teaching of the apostles in the New Testament, and examine carefully, and without prejudice, what they teach upon the subject.

To illustrate this by an example, let us suppose a person who has had some doubts upon the subject of water-baptism as a standing ordinance in the church, to be informed that this ordinance, of which he doubts, has at all times, and every where, existed in the Christian church; that it can be traced up to the earliest ages of the Christian church, so that no time can be mentioned in the history of the church, when it was not known to exist; we should certainly experience some surprise were he to reply, "Then, I think, the church has all along been in error; for it seems to *me* very improbable, not to say impossible, that Christ should have instituted such a merely external ordinance for his church." To such a statement the instant reply would be, "It is not for us to pronounce what it is probable and what it is not probable for our Saviour to have done in any case. The only question for us is one of fact, and all that we have to ask is, not what *ought to be*, but simply what *is*?" It is for us, therefore, to allow all due weight to this remarkable circumstance of the union of all Christians, in the early ages of the church, in the observance of this ordinance, and under that

impression, to proceed to the careful study of the teaching of Scripture upon the subject.” [This, as it appears to me, is the course which a proper sense of our own infirmities, and a due regard for truth, would dictate.

Assuming, then, the fact that there is a consent of the Fathers and the early church upon certain points of importance in Christianity, I admit that this consent affords a *presumption* in favour of the truth of the opinion or rite thus consented to ; and where it is one of which we are not already convinced, it becomes our duty to proceed immediately to the touchstone of Scripture, and thereby very carefully and cautiously to satisfy ourselves whether this presumption be correct or not. This admission, however, comes very much short of the ground assumed by the catholics in this matter. Not only do they view this unanimous consent of the early church as affording a *probability* that the point consented to may be true, but they contend that all things thus assented to *must* be true, that they *must* be found in the Scriptures, and that Scripture is always to be interpreted on the presumption that it does teach such things. As this opinion rests on the assumption that the universal consent of the early church to any doctrine necessarily, by the weight of its own authority, proves that doctrine to have been apostolic, it will be sufficiently refuted by showing the untenableness of this assumption. On

this point I solicit the reader's attention to the following series of remarks.

1. The argument most commonly used in support of this assumption is, that there is no other way of accounting for this unanimous consent of the early churches, but by supposing the existence amongst them of an apostolic tradition, and that consequently their doctrine is to be received as apostolical. Now, on this argument, I remark, 1st, That even supposing there was no other way of accounting for this fact, it does not thereby follow that we are bound to receive all the doctrines which the ancient church unanimously received, as *necessarily* true. When we say that there is no other way of accounting for a fact, all that we mean is, that *relatively to our knowledge* there is no other way of accounting for it; in other words, that *we know* of no other way of accounting for it. Now, in certain cases, this may be a very convincing mode of reasoning, as, *e. g.*, where we are *sure* that we know *all* the facts of the case, as in the inductions of natural science, or where, as in mathematics, the conclusion affirmed can be demonstrated to be the only one possible in the given case. But where the thing to be accounted for is an historical fact, and where we may be in possession of only a very partial or one-sided view of the events which have led to it, such a mode of reasoning as to its cause can be allowed, at best, only a very qualified authority. It still remains for any one to say,—

“ Though no other cause besides the one mentioned can be *supposed* by us to have existed, how can we be sure, *absolutely*, that no other cause actually did exist ?” It is true that, with regard to the majority of historical questions, such scepticism would be felt to be unreasonable ; but this arises from the circumstance, that on the majority of historical questions no momentous interests hang suspended, and therefore we are content to accept a possible solution of them when one more certain cannot be got. But this is not the case with the question before us. On the solution of it proposed by the catholics is to be built a demand upon our religious faith and obedience ; and this is too serious a matter to concede upon evidence whose whole weight is hypothetical. The ground I take here is very obvious, and I think very easily kept. I can yield up my conscience only to what I *know* to be divine. Let this be proved to me, and my scruples must end ; in such a case, to retain them one moment longer would be profane. But for this purpose the evidence must terminate in *proof*, not on a mere slender *probability*. It must be shown that the doctrine in question cannot but be divine,—not merely that we cannot account for all men knowing it on any other supposition than that it is divine. Our inability to account for this in any other way may be the result only of our ignorance and weakness, and no proof therefore of the strength of our conclusion. In such a case I repeat,

I must have proof, direct and convincing proof, of the agency of Deity in the matter before I can yield full assent to the position.¹

But, *2dly*, I deny that we have even this inferential probability in favour of the opinion in question. I deny that there is no other way of accounting for the universal prevalence of certain opinions in the early church but by supposing these to have flowed from oral tradition, handed down from the days of the apostles. It appears to me that, without any *great* exercise of ingenuity, several other modes of accounting for this fact may be suggested. If, for instance, the doctrine consented to be really true and authorised by scripture—say the doctrine of the Trinity—what is to forbid the supposition that that doctrine actually was drawn by each Father who taught it from the study of the written word? All these ancient Fathers possessed the written word; all of them were students and teachers of its contents; and all of them, therefore, for any thing that we have a right to say to the contrary, arrived at the knowledge of its truths by the same process by which we, in the present day, may arrive at the same.²

¹ See APPENDIX, Note G.

² Athanasius expressly informs us, in speaking of the much debated term *Homooousion*, in the council of Nice, that “its sense or import (τὴν διανοίαν) was gathered out of the Scriptures.” De Dec. Nic. Syn. 20; quoted in Hampden’s Bampton Lectures, 2d ed., Introd. p. xxxix. In this the members of that council only acted up to the injunctions laid upon them by the Emperor in his opening

The mere fact of unanimity in their case, under these circumstances, no more proves the possession by them of divine knowledge, *independent* of scripture, than it would in our case. What is *in* scripture may surely be got out of scripture by ordinary diligence and study; and therefore, unless we mean to deny to the early church the possession of those faculties which we claim for ourselves, I cannot see why their unanimity on points actually revealed in scripture should be held to argue their possession of a teacher independent of scripture itself. With regard to those points in which the Fathers agree, but which are not revealed in scripture, at least not clearly, their agreement by no means *necessarily* proves these points to have formed part of the apostolic teaching, for we find the same unanimity of opinion on points which are, on all hands, held to be absurd and false. There was at all times, in the early church, a strong disposition to receive doctrines or institutions proceeding from any venerable source; and these, once received, spread with great rapidity, especially after the system

address. "The gospels and apostolic books," said he, "as well as the oracles of the ancient prophets, plainly teach us what we should think concerning God. Wherefore, laying aside all hostile strife, let us secure a solution of the points in question from the inspired word." Theodoriti Hist. Eccles., lib. i. c. 7. Augustine gives the same account of the composition of the Apostles' creed, as it is usually called. "These words," says he, after recapitulating it, "which ye have heard, are scattered through the divine writings, but have been thence collected and brought into one," &c. De Symb. ad Catechum. cap. 1.

of the catholic church was framed. We can easily conceive, therefore, that the early suggestion of any sentiment, or of any interpretation of a passage of Scripture, proceeding from some influential name in the early church, might receive what appears to us universal acceptance; and were this, consequently, to be held as necessarily proving the apostolic character of the sentiment or interpretation, we should be constrained to fasten upon the New Testament many doctrines utterly foreign to its spirit, if not incompatible with its inspiration. Of the universal extent to which an early blunder came to be propagated, we have an instance in one case already referred to, I mean Clement's doctrine that the Phoenix supplies an illustration of the resurrection. This is derived from him by almost all the Fathers, and may be viewed as the doctrine of the early church; so that here is one instance, at least, of the possibility of an opinion becoming catholic which is yet neither apostolic nor true. Another is the mistake into which Tertullian and Cyprian fell concerning the New Testament doctrine of virginity. Founding upon certain sayings of our Lord and the apostle Paul concerning the expediency, in certain cases, of abstaining from marriage, and concerning the praise that was due to those who, for the kingdom of heaven's sake, denied themselves the comforts of the married life; and transferring to celibacy itself the commendations bestowed by the apostle on the *motives*

which, in such cases, led persons to practise celibacy, these Fathers taught that virginity was, in and by itself, a more holy state than matrimony, and so commended it to the admiration of the believers, that this doctrine became ere long the doctrine of the catholic church. These two instances are sufficient, I think, to show the possibility of opinions becoming universal in the early church which had an origin subsequent to the time of the apostles. There *is*, therefore, a way of accounting for the consent of the Fathers besides the supposition of an apostolic tradition, and consequently, the argument which would infer the existence of such a tradition from the fact of such consent, is deprived of its basis, and must fall to the ground.

2. Another argument often urged by the traditionists in support of their deference to the early church is, that from the circumstances of that church, its proximity to the age of the apostles, the use, by many of its members, of the language in which the New Testament is written as their vernacular tongue, and other things of the same kind, they may be supposed to have been more favourably situated than we are now for correctly ascertaining the meaning of the New Testament. With this we may conjoin the argument urged by Mr Newman, that the fit interpreter of Scripture is "the collective church, where, what is wanting in one member, is supplied by another, and the contrary errors of individuals elimi-

nated by their combination.”¹ Now, the *facts* assumed in these two arguments might be questioned; but I have classed them together because we may concede the assumed fact in each, and answer both in the same way. The answer I give is very brief, viz., that neither of them is to the point. They both go to prove what has been already conceded, viz., that where the Fathers, or any great body of good and intelligent men agree upon any point of doctrine, it becomes our wisdom to attach such weight to their concurrence as that we shall not rashly conclude them in error until we have very carefully examined the whole doctrine of scripture upon the subject; and farther, that in forming our own opinion it is of advantage to take into view the opinions of others, that so any oversights or errors on our part may, by their correctness, be remedied. But surely the proving and the conceding of this comes very far short of the proving and conceding of the position, that where the Fathers consent they *must* be in the right, and that to conclude, even from Scripture, against them, must be presumptuous.

3. On these arguments, therefore, I do not enlarge, but pass on to that which, if not the weightiest, is certainly the favourite argument of the party against which I am contending. This argument is an appeal to our consistency, and may be thus stated:—

¹ Prophetical Office of the Church, p. 190.

“ You admit,” it is said, “ the authority of the early church as sufficient to settle the canon of scripture ; with what reason, after such an admission, can you refuse to admit its authority in the interpretation of scripture ? In other words, you receive certain writings as apostolic upon the authority of tradition, why then do you refuse the interpretation of these which the same authority sanctions ? ” Now, this argument, no doubt, appears at first sight plausible and specious, but like many other specious defences of error, it will be found, on examination, nothing better than specious. In order to perceive the fallacy of it, we have only to distinguish between the evidence proper to an historical fact, and the evidence proper to a doctrine or opinion. The former is the concurrent testimony of competent witnesses ; the latter is argument and reasoning. We can never prove a historical fact by mere reasoning ; and as little can we prove a doctrine by mere testimony. Let this distinction, then, be made, and all the apparent force of this much vaunted argument melts away. The authorship of the New Testament is an historical fact, which, like all other such facts, is to be proved by testimony : the proper meaning of any part of the New Testament is a matter of opinion, which is to be made out by reasoning. Now, who does not see that one may, with the most perfect consistency, receive implicitly the concurrent testimony of the early church to the fact, and yet

refuse it to the opinion? In the one case the evidence adduced is proper and competent; in the other it is not. The apostolic authorship of the New Testament was a matter of public notoriety in the days of the early church, and all that we receive from its members is the attestation of this fact. If to this they add the deliverance of their opinion as to the meaning of the New Testament, that is a thing which we may take or reject as we please, for we have the New Testament before our eyes, and can judge in that matter for ourselves.

So plain a matter hardly, perhaps, needs to be illustrated; but a simple illustration may be borrowed from the practice of our courts of law. Supposing a question brought into court respecting the will of an individual deceased, and upon that will two points are raised, viz. 1. Is the signature appended to this will the *bona fide* signature of the party to whom it is ascribed? and, 2. Does a given clause of this will bear a certain interpretation? Now, here are two points, the one of fact, the other of opinion. In support of the former, say ten persons are called, who had competent opportunities of judging of the handwriting of the deceased, and that they all unanimously attest the signature in question to be his. Their testimony is received as valid, and the court admits the will to be genuine. But suppose each of these, in giving his testimony to the fact, had chosen to favour the court with his opinion as to the

meaning of the controverted clause, would their statement have been received with the same deference? Assuredly not. They would have been at once reminded that that was a matter in which the court could judge for itself, as the document was before it; that all that was wanted from them as witnesses was a deposition to the fact of the genuineness of the signature, and that though they were quite entitled to their opinion, and though the judge and jury might attach some weight to it, because of their connection with the deceased, yet it could not go into evidence, or be treated as their simple testimony would be. Of the justness of such a difference every one must be at once aware in such a case. Now, it is exactly the same in the case before us. We bow implicitly to the testimony of the Fathers in regard to the historical fact; but, in respect of their opinions, we take liberty to judge for ourselves. In this there is no inconsistency; it is accordant with every-day custom, and with common sense.

4. There is only one argument more which I have to notice on this part of my subject. It is one which goes upon the practice of our courts of justice in regard to the common or unwritten law of the realm, which is held by those adducing the argument to be analogous to the unwritten tradition of the church. This argument has been stated with

much clearness and ingenuity by Mr Keble in the following paragraph :—

“ If a maxim or custom can be traced back to a time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary ; if it pervade all the different courts, established in different provinces for the administration of justice ; and thirdly, if it be generally acknowledged in such sort, that contrary decisions have been disallowed and held invalid : then, whatever the exceptions to it may be, it is presumed to be part and parcel of our common law. On principles exactly analogous, the church practices and rules above mentioned, and several others, ought, we contend, apart from all scripture evidence, to be received as traditionary or common laws ecclesiastical. They who contend that the very notion of such tradition is a mere dream and extravagance ; who plead against it the uncertainty of history, the loss or probable corruption of records, the exceptions, deviations, interruptions, which have occurred through the temporary prevalence of tyranny, heresy, or schism ; must, if they would be consistent, deny the validity of the most important portion of the laws of this, and of most other old countries.”¹

Now this argument, it must be admitted, is both well put and exceedingly plausible. There can be no doubt of the fact assumed in it, that in our courts of justice, any thing that can, by the tests specified by Mr Keble, be found to be part of the common law, is allowed to be of equal authority with the statute law of the realm. But when the argument passes from this fact, to infer an equal authority in church law, as belonging to the unwritten traditions which have always and everywhere prevailed in the church, the transition is made by the bridge of a false analogy. For in proving any custom part of

¹ Sermon, p. 33.

the common law, what do we affirm? Why this; that as in all states, before a formal legislature is set up, people will legislate and arrange for themselves, so in regard to the custom in question, we show that it is one of those things on which the people in this country agreed *anterior* to the existence among them of written laws. The point proved here, then, is, that the law in question was one of the people's own making antecedent to the existence or operation of the authority which has made the statute law. But is this what Mr Keble wants to prove in regard to the traditionary institutes of the early church? If it be, his labour is superfluous; for his opponents never doubted the power of tradition to inform us of what institutes the early church made *for itself*. But this is not what Mr K. wants to prove. He wants to show that these institutes were not made by the people, but though unwritten, are yet part of the statute law of the kingdom. That is, he twists his analogy so that he would have it to prove the very opposite of what it does prove. His argument, rightly understood, is all upon the opposite side. Here, let us suppose, is a custom which the advocate pleads with the judge to preserve. The judge replies, that it is not mentioned in the written law, and therefore has not been prescribed by the authors of that law. "True," says the advocate; "but it was made by the people for themselves, before they had any formal lawgiver, and has been preserved

ever since." "Then," replies the judge, "it must stand; for a law made by the people for themselves anterior to legislation, is of equal authority with one made for them by their legislators." Now all this is very well in human courts of law, but it will not do in matters of Christian law. The legislation of the Christian church lies at its very foundation. To prove any institution in it, therefore, to be not of statute, but of common law, is to prove that it arose *after*, and not *before* the statutes were completed; in other words, to prove that it is a mere human device, engrafted upon the divine stock, but forming no part of that stock, and having no element of divinity in it. Let Mr Keble keep to his analogy. Let him prove, if he can, that his favourite doctrines concerning the church, the priesthood, and the sacraments, are part of "the common law" merely of the church. This to me would be sufficient proof of their unsoundness. For by the very act of showing that they were authorised only in this way, he would prove that they formed no part of the statute law of the Christian kingdom; and no part, therefore, of that code, which having alone received the sanction of the great Head of the church, is alone binding on any of his faithful subjects.

I have now gone over the principal arguments which I find in the books of the Anglo-catholics in support of their views concerning tradition as the witness for the truth and the standard inter-

preter of scripture. The result of the inquiry is, I hope, such as to satisfy the candid reader that no confidence whatever can, in a matter of such importance, be safely placed in the apostolical authority, or even in the certain orthodoxy of the traditions of the early church; and that so far from its being wise in us or binding on us to defer implicitly to these in expounding scripture, to do so might in many instances lead us into serious, if not ruinous error. In farther support of this conclusion, I subjoin a few remarks of a general nature.

1. The ground on which the Anglo-catholics rest their appeal to tradition is, that the Bible needs an interpreter, because the truths it teaches are nowhere formally and systematically announced, but rather diffused throughout its pages. I shall inquire afterwards how far this ground is tenable; but supposing for a moment that it is, does it not seem extremely preposterous to propose the works of the Christian Fathers as furnishing such an interpreter, when in them the very evil thus complained of in scripture is augmented a thousand fold? It needs but a very slender acquaintance with their writings to satisfy any one that such is the case. The greater part of their compositions consists of what we should now call "occasional treatises," written, perhaps, hastily, with hardly in any case even the pretension of systematic arrangement, containing many allusions to persons and circumstances,

of which from other sources we know nothing, and presenting truth in that incidental, partial, and one-sided aspect, which is common to all compositions of that order. On this account, to construct a system of patristic theology, must be regarded as one of the most Herculean of all literary toils, requiring for its successful accomplishment a degree of patient effort, calm reflection, acute discrimination, and profound learning, which in very few cases it is our happiness to see combined. Nothing surely can be more manifestly absurd than to prescribe such a task, as the necessary preliminary in every case to the study of scripture, and that especially on the ground that scripture is too unsystematic to be easily understood. "Let the scriptures be hard," exclaims Milton, in reference to this subject; "are they more hard, more crabbed, more abstruse than the Fathers? He that cannot understand the sober, plain, and unaffected style of the scriptures, will be ten times more puzzled with the knotty *Africanisms*, the pampered metaphors, the intricate and involved sentences of the Fathers; besides these fantastic and declamatory flashes, the cross jingling periods, which cannot but disturb and come athwart a settled devotion, worse than the din of rattles and bells."¹

2. To make the unanimous consent of the early church *the criterion* of divine truth, is to erect a

¹ Of Reformation touching Church Discipline. Works, vol. i. p. 25.

standard to which only a very limited portion of the race can appeal. Before an individual can satisfy himself on this head, what must he do? First he must make himself master of the Greek and Latin languages; for very few, comparatively, of the remains of Christian antiquity have been accurately translated into our vernacular tongue. Then he must procure a complete set of the works of the Fathers; and as it is desirable that these shall be in the best editions, this will require the outlay of a very large sum of money.¹ The next step is to make himself master of all the difficult questions, critical, historical, and personal, connected with these works and their authors. He must then set himself to the careful perusal of their contents, contending as he best may with their manifold obscurities, accurately discriminating those points on which the various writers agree from those on which they differ—anxiously separating the dogmas of the heretical from those of the orthodox Fathers—solicitously discerning what any who may have lapsed from the catholic faith taught before, from what they taught after their change, and then cautiously, patiently, and judiciously weighing the grand result of the whole. For such a work we must, on the most moderate computation, allow an average of twenty years' assi-

¹ On a very moderate estimate, from L.150 to L.200. "Every bookseller's catalogue tells the same tale; in fact, it is a regular *argumentum ad crumenam*." Brit. Crit. for April 1841, p. 332.

duous toil; after which the patient student, having doubtless succeeded in gathering those "precious fragments" of which Mr Keble speaks, may indulge the hope of being permitted to open and attempt to understand the statements of that book, which alone reveals to him how he is to be saved!

The announcement of such a proposal is a sufficient exposure of its utter unreasonableness and absurdity. Mr Keble, indeed,¹ seems to make very light of the matter; and perhaps to men of his and Dr Pusey's learning and leisure, toil like this may have been but a gymnastic pastime, though I think it would not be very difficult to turn to passages in the works of the Fathers, in which even they would admit a "dignus vindice nodus."² But what is to become of the myriads who have neither learning nor leisure for such researches, but whose interest in the truths of divine revelation is not second to that of the most learned scholar? For such there seems, on the principle of the traditionists, no resource but either to relinquish all hopes of understanding the Bible, or to follow implicitly the teaching of those who have, or who *say* they have, perused the writings of the fathers, and gathered thence the catholic creed. I know not which side of this alternative is the worse. To adopt the former would be deliberately to deprive ourselves of all spiritual illumination whatever; to concede the

¹ Sermon, pp. 40, 41.

² See APPENDIX, Note H.

latter, would be to place ourselves under the guidance of parties who, saving that they themselves tell us that the light they furnish us is the true one, may, for aught we can tell, be mere "wandering stars," leading us to destruction. One hardly knows which most to denounce in such a proposal, the cruelty which would place the mass of Christians in such a wretched predicament, or the folly of expecting that any man of sense and seriousness, would, with the Bible within his reach, submit to be so placed.

I am not ignorant of the device under which the catholics endeavour to conceal the offensiveness of their proposal thus to subject the faith of all men to the dictation of the clergy. Repudiating with apparent horror the idea of asking men to submit implicitly to individual clergymen, they betake themselves to that mysterious abstraction, "the church," and claim the submission of the people to the teaching of their ministers, not as to what these have by their own efforts learned, but what the church in her maternal wisdom and faithfulness has committed to them. As I shall have occasion subsequently to examine more fully the catholic doctrine concerning the church, I shall content myself at present with observing, that this subterfuge, so far from serving to obviate the objection above advanced, only enables me to repeat it with increased force. Supposing it granted that we are bound to defer to the teaching of the clergy of the catholic church as to

the teaching of the church herself, it still remains for us to inquire in each case, *first*, Whether the individual clergyman we are required to listen to be a *true* minister of the catholic church; and, *second*, Whether his teaching be *really* such as the church catholic has sanctioned. Now, for the solution of these two questions, not one man in a thousand has either the necessary time, or the requisite learning and skill. Before the former can be answered, on what catholics themselves maintain to be sound principles, we must be able to trace the regular succession of bishops from the time of the apostles downward, through which the clergyman in question has derived his orders,—an inquiry full of uncertainty and perplexity; and with regard to the latter, it resolves itself into the identical investigation of which I have above stated the hopeless difficulty to all except very learned and laborious men. It is obvious, therefore, that to refer the people to the authority of the church for their religious opinions, is only in another form to refer them to the authority of individual clergymen; for whither are they, circumstanced as they necessarily are, to go for information as to what is the church, and as to what the church has taught, but to the man who tells them that the true church has sent him to be their teacher? or when they are told that they are altogether unable to understand and interpret Scripture for themselves, and must consequently listen to the teaching of the

church, what *can* they understand by the admonition, but that they are implicitly to receive and believe all that their spiritual teacher inculcates upon them?

This system, then, of making tradition the interpreter of scripture, seems fraught with danger to the best interests of liberty and religion. Its tendency is to build up the sacerdotal power, by fostering a spirit of abject dependence in religious matters on the will of the clergy. It is a scheme for sapping the foundations of all intelligent conviction of divine truth, by persuading men to rest their hopes for eternity not on the word of God, not even on the unanimous consent of the church, but on the mere word of an individual who, for aught that his hearers can tell, may be himself profoundly ignorant as well of what tradition teaches, as of what Scripture proves.¹

3. The necessity of referring to tradition as the interpreter of Scripture, is pleaded on the ground that by this means alone can Christians in later times have an approximation to the same advantages for understanding scripture as were enjoyed by the early Christians, from the existence among them of an apostolic standard of belief distinct from but harmonious with the written word. Now, were the assumption on which this argument is based correct, we should naturally expect to find in the writings of

¹ See APPENDIX, Note I.

the Fathers, if not unerring accuracy in the explanation of scripture, yet traces of *confidence in the sufficiency* of that divine key to the meaning of the written word, which in this case they must have possessed, and *continual appeals* to tradition as an authoritative standard in all questions affecting the sense of the sacred oracles.

Every one must feel how reasonable is such an expectation; but if any were to proceed to the study of the Fathers with such an expectation, he would soon find himself destined to be disappointed. I venture to say, that an appeal to tradition for the explanation of scripture is one of the rarest phenomena in the writings of the early church. In perusing these, nothing seems more obvious, than that their authors found just the same sort of difficulties in scripture which we find now, and sought their removal by the same processes which are familiar to us. It would be easy to multiply quotations in support of this assertion, but the following may suffice.

IRENÆUS.—“ Now, if we cannot solve all the difficulties that are found in scripture, let us not seek another God beside him who already is, for no impiety can be greater than this. Rather ought we to entrust such things to God who made us, rightly knowing that the scriptures are indeed perfect, having been uttered by the word and Spirit of God, whilst we, inasmuch as we are but little, and as of yesterday, need, on this account, the knowledge of

his mysteries from his word and Spirit. Nor is it surprising that such should be the case with us in regard to things spiritual, heavenly, and that need to be revealed, since, even in regard to those things which are before our feet—the things I mean in this part of creation which we both see and consume, and which are with us—much escapes our knowledge, and this we commit to God. . . . If, then, in creation some things are known only to God, whilst others come within the sphere of our cognition, where is the harm, since all scripture is spiritual, if of its contents some things we can solve by the grace of God, whilst others we must leave to God himself, and that not in this world only but also in that which is to come; so that God may ever teach, and man be ever a learner.”¹

The same writer, after telling us that some things in scripture are plainly and unambiguously stated whilst others are couched in figures, exhorts us to compare the latter with the former, adding, “for he who thus interprets, interprets safely, and thus figurative passages receive the same explanation from all, and by truth, and the apt coherence of its members, and the absence of concussion, the body abides entire. On the other hand,” he continues, “to combine those things which are not plainly stated and placed before our eyes with such explanations of

¹ Adv. Hæres. ii. 47.

figurative passages as each may choose to invent, is to deprive all of a standard of truth, and to make as many truths, mutually opposing each other and establishing contrary dogmata, as there are authors of these explanations. In this way man would be forever inquiring yet never attaining to *the* truth, because rejecting the proper rule of investigation. . . . What is this but, instead of openly building our house on the firm and enduring rock, to erect it on the shifting sand where it may be easily overturned?"¹

ORIGEN.—“Divinely inspired Scripture is, on account of its obscurity, like a house with many apartments, the keys to which are not fitted each to its own lock, but are dispersed throughout the building, so that it is a most difficult work to find the keys and apply them each to the door it is designed to open. In like manner, the difficulties of Scripture can be removed only by means of other passages scattered throughout the volume, which contain in them that by which these may be explained. And I think the apostle suggests such a mode of understanding the divine word when he says, ‘which things we speak not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth but which the Spirit teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.’”²

CHRYSOStOM.—“Of all difficulties in Scripture

¹ Adv. Hæres. ii. 46.

² Philocal. cap. ii. p. 22, ed. Spencer.

the context affords the best solution; for when one knows the scope of the speaker, and whom he is addressing and of what he speaks, a distinct and orderly view of his words will be obtained.”¹

ATHANASIUS.—“ For the sound investigation and true knowledge of the scriptures, there needs a good life, a pure spirit, and the virtue which is according to Christ, that guided thereby the intellect may be able to attain and possess what it craves, in so far as it is competent for human nature to learn of the word of God. For without a pure disposition and the imitation of such a life as the saints lead, no one can apprehend the divine word.”²

These extracts, which are taken from writers widely separated from each other, may be taken as a specimen of the way in which the Christian Fathers speak of the difficulties of scripture and the means of surmounting them. They plainly show, I think, that these writers viewed this matter much in the same way as we do now; and that so far from feeling themselves possessed of an *infallible* guide to the meaning of scripture, they knew that they had no other resource in attempting to solve its difficulties but such as patient inquiry, honest effort, pure motives, and constant prayer for divine aid could sup-

¹ Opp. tom. v. p. 790; Ap. Suiceri Thes. Eccles. i. p. 793, ubi plura.

² De Incarnatione, i. 57.

ply. In what respects, then, were their advantages so much greater than ours that we must be content to receive the law at their mouth, and hold ourselves privileged in being able, after a life-long study of their writings, to collect a few fragments of a creed which they either seem never to have possessed, or possessing to have treated as unnecessary or unserviceable?

4. If the rule of Vincent of Lerins be followed as the test of truth, this dogma of implicit deference to tradition must be rejected, for it has not in its favour the *universal consent* of the Fathers.

That in the writings of the early church many passages occur in which apostolic tradition is spoken of in the most reverential terms is not to be denied. But before these passages can be adduced as evidence that their authors support the dogma in question, it must be clearly shown that the tradition of which they thus speak is the same thing which now passes under that name; and even after this has been successfully done in certain cases, the argument would be very far from being complete, for there would still remain the *opposing* sentiments of others of the Fathers to show that the doctrine was not held every where and by all.

When the Fathers speak of tradition, they often intend thereby the apostolic *writings*, using the word in the same sense in which it is used by Paul in

2 Thess. ii. 15.¹ In other cases, they affix the term “apostolical tradition” to any doctrine commonly regarded in the church as sanctioned by Scripture, without thereby intending to convey any idea of its having been handed down *orally* from the apostles; just as we, in the present day, speak of “apostolical doctrine,” meaning thereby doctrine which is commonly received by Christians as in accordance with the statements of the divine word.² After every deduction, however, has been made of passages in which the word is obviously used in one or other of these senses, there will still remain sufficient evidence, that by many of the Fathers a high degree of importance was attached to the unwritten traditions preserved in the catholic church.

Now, it is not at all necessary for my present argument, that I should inquire minutely *what* degree of importance these Fathers assigned to tradition.³ I am willing to allow that they took the same ground on this subject with the catholics of more

¹ See this copiously shown by Suicer, Thes. Ecclesiast. in voc. *παράδοσις*. Compare also Bennet’s Congregational Lecture for 1841, p. 95—105.

² So Jerome speaks of “Traditiones apostolicas sumptas de Vetere Testamento.” Ep. ad Evagrium. Opp. tom. i. p. 329, ed. Basil, 1537, fol.

³ The reader who wishes to see this part of the subject discussed, will find much satisfaction from Conybeare’s Bampton Lecture for 1840; Lect. V. and VI.; Hampden’s Lecture for 1832, Introd. p. xxxv., 2d edit.; Stillingfleet’s Grounds of the Protestant Religion, part i. ch. 6; Whitaker’s Disputatio de Sacra Scriptura contra Papistas, &c., Quæst. vi. c. 12, Lond. 1588.

recent times; for what I am now concerned to show is not that *none* of the Fathers were traditionists, but that *all* of them were not. For this purpose it is only necessary that I should adduce passages from their writings, in which they implicitly or expressly repudiate the authority of tradition, either as the teacher of truth, or the interpreter of scripture. Not to weary the reader with many quotations, where a few will suffice, I shall content myself with the following, which I have selected chiefly for the authority of their authors' names.

POLYCARP.—“ Neither am I, nor is any like me, capable of following the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul, who being among you, in the presence of the men of that day, taught accurately and surely the doctrine of truth, and who, after he was gone, wrote to you an epistle, by bending your attention on which ye shall be able to edify yourselves in the faith which has been given to you.”¹ This language is the more valuable that it occurs in an epistle addressed to a church which is regarded by catholics as one of the primary conservators of apostolic tradition; that it was written at a time when the oral teaching of Paul might easily have been preserved in the church had that been deemed necessary; and that its author, specifying both Paul's *spoken* and *written* instructions to that church, dis-

¹ Ep. ad Philippenses, § iii.

tinently limits the use of the former to those who were Paul's contemporaries (*τῶν τότε ἀνθρώπων*), while he refers to the latter, as the permanent source of instruction to all of a later age.

IRENÆUS.—“The *only persons* through whom we know the scheme of our salvation are those through whom the gospel has come to us. This, indeed, they at first preached, but afterwards, by the will of God, *handed it down to us in the scriptures*, as the foundation and pillar of our faith.”¹

ORIGEN.—“All who believe, and are sure that grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, and who know Christ to be the truth, as he himself said, receive that science, which has to do with the regulation of life and manners, from *no other source than the words of Christ himself*. I say the words of Christ himself, by which I mean not only those which he uttered when he became man, and taught whilst he was in the flesh, for long before this Christ was the word of God in Moses and the prophets; for without the word of God how could they have prophesied concerning Christ? After his ascension into heaven he spoke by his apostles, as Paul indicates in these words,—‘Do ye, indeed, seek a proof of Christ speaking in me?’”²

CYPRIAN.—“It is said that nothing should be introduced except what has been delivered (*traditum*

¹ Adv. Haer. iii. 1.

² Praef. in opus de Principiis, § 1.

est). Whence, then, is this deliverance (*traditio*)? Has it descended with the authority of our Lord in the Gospels, or comes it from among the injunctions and Epistles of the apostles? For those things are to be done *which are written*, as God testifies and enjoins upon Joshua the son of Nun, saying,—‘ This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all things that are written therein.’ (Josh. i. 8.) So also the Lord, on sending forth his disciples, commands that nations should be baptized, and taught to observe all things which he had enjoined. If, then, either in the Gospels, or in the Epistles and Acts of the Apostles, this be contained, let it be observed as a divine and sacred tradition. When we revert to the head and origin of divine tradition, human error ceases, and whatever lay concealed under the gloom and cloud of darkness, comes forth into the light of truth. If a pipe which formerly sent forth a free and copious supply of water were suddenly to fail, should we not go to the fountain-head, there to ascertain the cause of the failure, whether it arose from the spring being dried up at the source, or from the water, after issuing plentifully thence, being arrested in its mid course, that, if through any stoppage or leakage in the pipe, the water was prevented from flowing continuously, this might be remedied, and the citizens be supplied again with water for drinking

and other uses, with the same copiousness with which it proceeded from the source? So also it behoves us, the priests of God, who keep the divine precepts, when in any one the truth nods and wavers, to revert to the source,—our Lord's tradition, evangelical and apostolic, that our mode of acting may arise whence both our order and our origin sprung.”¹

AUGUSTIN.—“ We ought not to esteem the disputations of any, be they what they may, even catholics, and men of repute, as we do the canonical scriptures; as if it were not allowed us, without detracting from the honour due to such men, to condemn and repudiate aught in their writings which we may have discovered contrary to truth, as that has been understood through the divine aid, either by others or ourselves. Such is my course with the writings of others, and such I wish to be the course of those who attend to mine.”²

ID.—“ Who knows not that holy canonical scripture, as well of the Old as of the New Testament, is contained within certain bounds of its own, and that it is to be so put before all the later writings of bishops, that there can be neither doubt nor discus-

¹ Ep. 74, ad Pompeium, pp. 223, 228; Ed. Goldhorn Lips. 1838. See also the 63d Ep. (ad Cæcilium), especially § 14, p. 164.

² Ep. 111, ad Fortunatianum.

sion affecting it as to the truth or rectitude of whatever stands therein written.”¹

To these testimonies it would be easy to add what would fill a volume from the writings of Chrysostom alone. The above, however, are more than sufficient for our present purpose, as they prove incontestibly that the Anglo-catholic doctrine concerning tradition was not at any time the *universal* doctrine of the early church. Here, then, is a dilemma, out of which I see not how the advocates of that doctrine can escape. Either they must give up Vincent’s test of true doctrine, or they must give up the truth of their own doctrine concerning tradition. In either case they give up their entire system; for, in the former, they leave themselves without any test of truth distinct from scripture; in the latter, they relinquish the guide by whose aid alone they tell us scripture can be understood.

¹ De Bapt. cont. Donat. ii. 3.

SECTION IV.

RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT IN INTERPRETING
SCRIPTURE.

Hitherto I have been occupied in endeavouring to expose the unsoundness of those positions which the advocates of tradition assume in defence of their views. I turn now to the still more important task of offering some remarks in support of the antagonist doctrine, that it is the duty and privilege of all who have the Bible in their hands to study it for themselves,—to gather from its statements the truths it contains, according to the best of their own judgments,—and, by the conclusions at which they thus arrive, to regulate their religious opinions, feelings, and conduct.

The question here at issue has been so clearly stated by Archbishop Whately, in one of his admirable essays, that I cannot do better than cite his words. “The question, when plainly stated,” says he, “is not whether men should follow the guidance of inclination and fancy; nor, again, whether they should reject all human teaching, and refuse all assistance in their inquiries after religious truth” [the writer had previously shown the error and folly of such assumptions]; “but, supposing a man willing

to avail himself of all helps within his reach, and divest himself of all prejudice, is he ultimately to decide according to the best of his own judgment, and embrace what appears to him truth? or, is he to forego the exercise of his own judgment, and receive implicitly what is decided for him by the authority of the church, labouring to stifle any different conviction that may present itself to his mind?"¹

When the question is stated in this way, there seems no room for hesitation as to the answer. It is surely not *unreasonable* that a being endowed with intelligence should claim the right of determining for himself, after the use of all suitable means for arriving at a satisfactory conclusion, whether any given doctrine be accordant or not with what is admitted to be an infallible standard of truth. On the other hand, nothing appears more absurd than to demand of such an one that he should relinquish any view which he believes to be sanctioned by that standard; that he should endeavour to stifle convictions which have grown up in his mind as the results of careful observation and reflection; and that he should adopt, not only without conviction, but in the face of conviction, sentiments which he believes that standard to condemn, simply because

¹ Essays on some of the Dangers to Christian Faith which may arise from the teaching or the conduct of its Professors, Lond. 1839, p. 179.

they come recommended by the authority of certain ancient and venerable names in the Christian church. It may be fairly questioned, indeed, whether this be not demanding of men what no one is physically capable of rendering; for it is by no means certain that we have the power of dismissing or receiving convictions at the mere bidding of others, however much we may venerate their character, or respect their superior attainments. The judgment may be swayed by reason, but it can hardly be constrained by authority; so that the utmost that can be hoped from denying men the right of judging for themselves in the matter of religion, is to produce an uniformity of *profession* throughout the church, without either securing, on the one hand, that the doctrines professed shall really be understood and believed, or, on the other, precluding the possibility of doctrines utterly opposed to these having possession of the mind.

To such reasonings the reply usually given is, that they are of force only on the assumption, that the opinions authoritatively imposed on men have not been shown to be necessarily accordant with Scripture, and that they are of no weight as opposed to the claims of tradition, which can be shown to be of necessity unanimous with Scripture, having proceeded from the same divine author.¹ To this it

¹ See Review of Arnold's Sermons in the British Critic for October 1841, p. 336, ff.

might be enough to reply, by referring to the previous investigations in this chapter, which, if accurate, go to show that there is *no* good reason for concluding that tradition is necessarily in accordance with scripture; but, not to insist upon this at present, let us meet the traditionists upon this ground to which they invite us, and let us see what effect the assumed accordance of tradition with scripture will produce on the reasons above stated in favour of the necessity of private judgment. We shall suppose a person to go to the study of scripture with this persuasion on his mind, and at the same time, with a full understanding of what it is which tradition teaches. He reads attentively, passage after passage, endeavouring to obtain from each a clear and precise meaning in accordance with what he has been taught to believe. For a while he meets, we shall suppose, with no interruption, all that he reads appearing to harmonize with what he had been taught; but at length (as the very assumption that tradition is necessary to explain scripture supposes that there is much in scripture not, at first sight, in accordance with all that the church has prescribed,) we may conceive he will meet with difficulties in the shape of statements which he cannot, on any principles of interpretation, reconcile with his creed, or the harmony of which with his creed he cannot perceive. Now, what in this case is he to do? He has been assured that "tradition

teaches, and scripture proves;" but here is a case in which the teacher says one thing and the authority to which that teacher appeals, seems to say another thing. Is he, then, to bow to the former and despise the latter? or is he to do his best to believe that the two are in harmony, though, as far as he knows any thing of the matter, he is sure that they are not? If the latter be affirmed, we are brought back to our original inquiry, Whether such a thing be reasonable or possible? and that exactly under the same circumstances *with* the assumption of a harmony between tradition and scripture, as *without* that assumption; so that this assumption in no degree helps those who insist on its being made. If the former be maintained, the ground originally assumed by the Anglican catholics must be deserted for that of the Romanist, and tradition be raised from the place of a mere interpreter of scripture to the rank of a superior to scripture. From such a position as this there are many of the Anglican party who will, I trust, recoil, incompatible as the retention of it is with their avowed doctrine concerning tradition and scripture. But if they shrink from this position, I earnestly intreat them to reflect whether their doctrine of a creed, as the authoritative interpreter of scripture, leaves them any alternative but to maintain that, unreasonable and impracticable as it may appear, it is nevertheless the duty of all men to distrust their own judgments,

and, in spite of the strongest evidence to the contrary, to believe themselves in error when they think they have discovered in scripture any doctrine that appears to them inconsistent with the traditionary teaching of the church.

When we look into the writings of catholics for reasons in support of a doctrine so extravagant and apparently so preposterous, we find them enlarging much on the obscurity of scripture, and on man's proneness to err in his attempts to understand its statements, if he be not guided in his inquiries by the teaching of an authoritative standard.

In reference to the alleged obscurity of the scriptures, the writer of one of the Tracts for the Times affirms, that "if scripture contains any system at all, it *must* contain it covertly, and teach it obscurely, because it is altogether most immethodical and irregular in its structure."¹ This, it must be allowed, is not the most suitable language in which to write of the words which the Holy Ghost hath taught; but, passing this, the *substance* of the affirmation contained in the concluding clause of this extract may be admitted, for it must be obvious to all, even without so lengthened an illustration of the matter as the author of this tract has given, that the truths of scripture are not presented to us in the form of a dry catalogue of dogmas, but are

¹ Tract No. 85, p. 35.

brought forward, as it were, incidentally and in connection with their fundamental facts and their practical bearings on the character, hopes, and conduct of men. In this respect the word of God resembles his work in creation, where the principles of every natural science may be found, but where nothing is arranged in systematic order and stiffness. And the difficulty thence arising to the student of scripture is just the same as the student of nature has to contend with in the multitude and variety of the facts which he has to collect and arrange before he can safely determine any natural law. But if the difficulty in the one case resemble that in the other, so does the advantage arising in both from the very circumstance which originates the difficulty. What human being, to facilitate the attainment of philosophical knowledge, would desire to see the world thrown out of its present form into the rigid orderliness of scientific arrangement,—its minerals classified according to their chemical ingredients,—its animals pent up after the fashion of a museum,—and its herbs and flowers planted out with the formal accuracy of a botanical conservatory? As little is it to be desired that scripture were more systematic than it is. The same wisdom and goodness which has made the absence from the natural world of a scientific arrangement of its phenomena to minister to man's happiness, whilst it stimulates to philosophical inquiry, has been employed to secure for the readers

of the divine word increased advantage by a disposition of its contents which sustains the interest, whilst it stimulates the researches of the reader. A dry lifeless system of truth, learned by rote, is apt to lie in the memory as a mere inert form,—to become bed-ridden in the mind, as Coleridge phrases it;¹ whereas, truths presented to the understanding,—not “immethodically and irregularly,” which cannot surely be affirmed of any of God’s works,—but with that freeness of arrangement which the Bible exemplifies, are found to possess a freshness of interest which makes the repeated study of them attractive. “Not in vain,” exclaims the pious Augustine, addressing God, “hast thou willed that the shadowy mysteries of so many pages should be written; nor are these woods without their harts who betake themselves unto them again and again, watching and feeding, lying down and ruminating. O Lord, perfect me, and unfold these to me. Lo, thy voice is my joy, thy voice more than affluence of pleasures.”² In another part of his writings the same idea is unfolded, if not so poetically yet more clearly; “God hath in the scriptures covered his mysteries with clouds, that the love of truth in men might be inflamed by the very difficulty of apprehending it. For were there in them only what we could very easily apprehend, there would be on our part neither

¹ Aids to Reflection, p. 1.

² Confess., lib. xi. § 3, p. 207, ed. Pusey. Oxon. 1838.

studious investigation nor the sweetness of finding truth."¹

Whilst, however, it is admitted that the want of systematic formality in the statements of scripture is a source of difficulty in the study of its contents, I cannot admit the cogency of the reasoning which would deduce from this the conclusion, that it is not desirable that each man should be left free and unfettered to study them for himself. It is to be observed in the outset, that even catholics themselves do not pretend that the difficulty lies in ascertaining the sense of each passage of the sacred volume. In the words of the writer above quoted, it is "the *system*" of truth contained in scripture which alone it is difficult to unfold or ascertain. Respecting separate statements, especially the general statements of Christian doctrine and duty in the Bible, there can be no sort of question that they are as intelligible to any person of ordinary intellect in the form in which they stand in scripture, as when the truths they announce are embodied in a creed. The only point on which it is pretended that insuperable difficulty is to be encountered, is in the attempt to assign to these separate statements their proper place in the system of divine truth which the Bible unfolds.

Now, it is worthy of inquiry here, how far a

¹ De vera Relig., c. 17 ; quoted by Dr Pusey in the notes to his admirable edition of Augustine's Confessions.

knowledge of the system of the Christian theology, as a system, be *necessary* for the great interests of man as a sinner in the sight of God. Supposing it proved, that it is hopelessly beyond the reach of the mass of readers to construct, each for himself, a correct system of theology, in what way, and to what extent, is this a misfortune? Does it go the length of interfering with the individual's hopes of salvation? Or does it merely prevent his reaping the *advantages* which a systematic view of any science always confers upon those who are concerned in the application of its principles to practical ends? I can hardly conceive that the former part of this alternative will be maintained, for it would go to exclude from all hope of salvation many who, like the thief on the cross, are not in circumstances to receive a systematic detail of Christianity, as well as multitudes whose limited faculties, or unfavourable mental habits, positively incapacitate them from grasping a systematic view of any science. But if the latter be adopted, it follows, that the sole use of authoritative teaching in the church, is to help men to such an acquaintance with their Bible, as may enable them to become not good Christians, so much as good theologians. If this latter result be thought desirable, by all means let it be recommended and aimed at; but let it not be confounded with the former, nor let the discipline which may be thought requisite for this, the more difficult attainment, be

pleaded as a barrier in the way of the other, the easier, but unspeakably more valuable of the two.

But I am not prepared to admit, save for the sake of argument, that the difficulty of arriving at a satisfactory conclusion regarding the system of truth revealed in the Bible, is so great as to preclude any man of sound judgment and common industry from attaining this advantage. Let there be an honest desire to discover truth; let the inquiry be prosecuted with care and perseverance; and let devout prayer ascend continually to God for the enlightening influences of his Holy Spirit, and I am bold to say, there is nothing in scripture to prevent any man of intelligence from arriving at as full and clear an apprehension of its truths, not only in themselves, but in their relative order and harmony, as could possibly be conveyed to him through the medium of any creed that has been, or may yet be penned. The task is not so unspeakably difficult that we should despair of its being accomplished if the conditions above specified be complied with. If passages be taken in the obvious sense which their grammatical construction, and the context in which they stand require,—if one passage be compared with others relating to the same subject in other parts of the sacred volume,—if the aid which judicious commentaries and notes on scripture supply be wisely used,—and if the light be faithfully reflected upon scripture which may be borrowed from the

practical experience of the people of God, as recorded both in the inspired narratives, and in the biographies of Christians of more recent times, — it seems hardly conceivable that any person of ordinary intelligence, who looks for the assistance of the Divine Spirit in the study of the Bible, should ultimately fail of attaining a satisfactory acquaintance with its contents.¹ Nor are we left in this matter to mere conjecture. Holy men there are, and pious women not a few, even in the humbler walks of life, whose studies of the sacred page have made them wiser than their teachers, and given them to understand more than the ancients. With such it has been my privilege often to meet; and comparing what I have heard from them of the meaning of God's word with what I have learned in the same department from the writings of the Fathers, I have no hesitation in saying, that the latter against the former is but "as the small dust in the balance." To talk of the hopeless obscurity of the scriptures if they be not interpreted by creeds, seems to me the mere cant of sacerdotal assumption. That book which Timothy,

¹ "If the sense of the scriptures, as to any important point, may fairly be doubted by honest and sensible men, it seems to me no better than a mockery to call them the rule of faith; and it is imputing an obscurity to God's revelation, such as attaches to the works of no philosopher and no human legislator; for where is the philosopher whose main principles are not to be made out by his own disciples? where is the law whose main enactments are diversely interpreted by those who honestly study them?"—Arnold's Sermons, vol. iii. Introd. p. xxviii.

whilst but a child, could know so as to be made wise thereby unto salvation,—that book which it forms part of the business of every pious parent to expound to his household around the domestic hearth,—that book over whose choicest treasures thousands of the poor, the illiterate, the despised, are rejoicing, not only in this country, but in lands which but a few years ago were covered with the gross darkness of heathenism,—that book whose most hidden depths have been explored and expounded by men on whose minds the light of tradition never dawned,—that book can be “hopelessly obscure” only to those who are either too idle to study it, or too proud to learn what it inculcates.

It is usual to meet such arguments by referring to the fact that great diversity of sentiment prevails among those who call themselves Christians, and that this affords evidence of the necessity of an authoritative creed to guide men to the truth. To this it may be sufficient to reply very briefly as follows: In the *first* place, experience has amply shown that this expedient is utterly inefficient for the production of the desired result, the greatest disparity of sentiment being found in the bosom of both the Romish and Anglican churches, as well as of other sects which make use of authoritative forms of belief. *2dly*, There seems no natural adaptation in a creed to produce uniformity of opinion among Chris-

tians. Aristotle justly remarks,¹ that there are two things which the mind seeks before satisfactory conviction can be produced concerning any object: the one in answer to the question, *What* is it? the other in answer to the question, *Why* is it? Now, a creed only meets one of these conditions. It only tells us *what* is to be believed; it says nothing as to *why* this is to be believed. The utmost it can effect, therefore, is to inform us of what the author of the creed believed to be true; it can never convince us that his belief in this respect is correct. Conviction must, after all, be the result of a personal study of the *evidence* afforded by scripture on the subject; and this, as already observed, opens the way for a diversity of sentiment just as much with a creed as without one. *In fine*, that accordance of sentiment which creeds cannot produce is found to exist independent of such expedients. In support of this, I may appeal to the substantial agreement of all the great formularies of Christian doctrine which have been issued, whether by churches or individuals professing to draw their sentiments *from Divine revelation alone*. This fact proves clearly that creeds are not needed to produce uniformity of sentiment; *that* existed before these creeds were composed: for the reason why these creeds agree thus substantially is, that their

¹ Analyt. Post. Lib. ii. cap. 1.

authors, studying scripture each one for himself, came respectively to the same conclusion. The uniformity of sentiment was produced by the uniform teaching of scripture, and of this the accordance of the creeds is but the result and manifestation. All this points to the conclusion that it is not to formularies of doctrine that we are to look for the preservation of the unity of the faith, but to the free, honest, and devout study of the word of God. "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." If Christians generally would obey the apostolic injunction, and "laying aside all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save their souls," it would be found more easy than it is sometimes thought "for all to come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."¹

When we look into the Bible, we find the most ample support given to the position now in defence. To the careful personal scrutiny of its contents all are encouraged, entreated, commanded to come, each man for himself. The man, we are told, whose "delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditateth in that law day and night, shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit

¹ James i. 21; Ephes. iv. 13.

in his season, and whatsoever he doth shall prosper.—The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.—To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word there shall be no dawn to them: but they shall pass through the land, distressed and famished.—Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life.—These [the Bereans] were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily whether these things were so. *Therefore* many of them believed, of honourable women who were Greeks, and men not a few.—Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another.—Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.—Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand.”¹ Such are a few of the statements scattered through scripture respecting the use to be made of its contents. Could such statements have found a place in its pages, had it not been the will of God that all into whose hands it came should study it for themselves?

The doctrine thus set forth in Scripture seems to

¹ Ps. i. 2, 3; xix. 7; Is. viii. 20 [as translated by Dr Henderson in his valuable work on Isaiah, Lond. 1840]; John v. 39; Acts xvii. 11, 12; Col. iii. 16; 1 Thess. v. 21; Rev. i. 3.

have been heartily acknowledged and advocated by the most distinguished teachers of the early church. Whilst they admit that there are difficulties in scripture, they nevertheless exhort and encourage all Christians to grapple with these difficulties, and to judge for themselves of what scripture teaches. Lactantius reproaches the heathen with their deference to antiquity as unworthy men of reason and intelligence, and advocates most strenuously the duty of each man's judging for himself in a matter of so much importance as religion. "Let each man," he exclaims, "trust to his own judgment, and lean on his own faculties, for the investigation and estimation of truth, rather than be deceived by believing another's errors as if he were himself destitute of reason. God hath given to all, man by man, wisdom as their portion, that they may both investigate what is unknown and estimate what is known."¹ Origen felt himself called upon in advocating Christianity against the attacks of Celsus, to defend the scriptures against the charge that they were written with too much homeliness (*εὐτελείας*) of style, and this he does upon the ground that "Jesus and his apostles were intent upon a mode of address which not only should express the truth, but at the same time be capable of guiding the many, (*τοὺς πολλούς*, *the mass of men*), that being converted and drawn they might, each

¹ Div. Instit. Lib. ii. c. 7.

according to his ability, (ἐκαστος κατὰ δύναμιν,) apprehend the deep mysteries announced in the apparently homely words.”¹—“ All inspired scripture,” says Basil, “ is also profitable, being written by the Spirit for this end, that as in a common laboratory (ιατρείῳ) all of us might select, each for himself, the medicine suited to his ailment.”²—“ It becomes those hearers,” says the same Father, “ who are taught in the scriptures to prove thereby the things spoken by their teachers, to receive what accords with the scriptures, and to repudiate what is opposed to them, as well as very earnestly to refrain from the society of those by whom such dogmas are held.”³—“ I always advise,” says Chrysostom, “ and shall never cease to advise and call upon you all not only to attend to what is said here in the church, but also to be diligent in reading the divine scriptures at home. Nor let any one allege the usual frivolous excuses, ‘ I am engaged in public affairs, or I have a trade, and a wife and children to take care of; in a word, I am a secular person, it is not my business to read.’ So far are these things from making out a valid or even tolerable excuse, that upon these accounts, and for these very reasons, you have the more need to read the scriptures.”⁴—“ Respecting the divine and holy

¹ Adv. Cels. Lib. vi. sub. init. p. 275, ed. Spencer.

² Proem. in Psalmos, sub. init. ed. Basil. 1551, fol.

³ Ascet. 71, sect. 3.

⁴ De Lazar. Hom. iii. tom. i. p. 737, cited by Conybeare in his Bampton Lectures, p. 48.

mysteries of the faith," says Cyril of Jerusalem, "it behoves us neither to deliver without regard to the divine writings what may occur, nor to be carried away by mere plausibility and craft of words. As little should you merely believe me telling you these things unless you receive the evidence of the things said from the divine writings; for this is the safety of our faith, that it is not from invention of words but from demonstration of the divine writings."¹ But it is unnecessary to multiply quotations here after those which have already been given in this section from the most eminent of the Fathers, expressive of their feelings respecting scripture. A desire to withhold the word of God from the people is not one of the sins which can be justly laid to the charge of these writers. It was not until the clergy became ambitious of "lording it over God's heritage" that a different tone was adopted, and men were taught that the Bible was for them a sealed book, which only the priesthood were able to unfold. In the pure light of scripture pretensions to authority over men's consciences cannot stand, and therefore it became necessary to discourage the people from attempting to draw their opinions solely from its pages. This attained, it was easy to follow it up by inculcating upon the enslaved minds of the multitude any dogmas that tended to favour the power, pride, and

¹ Cateches. Quart. de Sp. Sanct.

avarice of the clergy. When the light of the sun is withdrawn, the task of seducing the traveller from the right path becomes as easy as it is tempting to those who are to be profited by his errors.

It will be found I believe almost invariably the case, wherever men are persuaded to regard the Bible as a book which they can understand only through the teaching of the church, that they yield far more deference to the formulas in which that teaching is embodied, than to the inspired word itself. This is only what might have been expected, for the natural tendency of such a conviction is to lower the Bible in the estimation of those by whom it is entertained, whilst it unduly elevates in their view the human composition to which they are, in the first instance at least, indebted for their religious views.

The Bible claims to be not only a *full* but a *perfect* revelation of God's will to man. This claim the advocate of creeds as the authoritative interpreters of scripture professes to admit; but what he admits in words, he denies in effect. For, what do we mean when we say that scripture is *perfect* as a revelation of God's will to man? We mean surely that all truth necessary for our salvation is therein made known to us in the manner best adapted to be apprehended by us. But if this be the meaning of the assertion, is it less than a contradiction in terms to maintain that the truth thus perfectly made known

to us cannot be known by us without the aid of the church's authoritative teaching? It is impossible for the mind to receive both these propositions. If an astronomer were to tell us that the atmosphere is a perfect medium for the transmission of the sun's rays to our organs of vision, and at the same time to assure us that to this perfect medium must be added another of stained glass before we could perceive the light, we should conclude at once either that he was labouring under some strange hallucination, or that he was attempting to amuse himself at our expense. Nothing can prevent the mind from concluding that that can be no perfect medium of illumination to which something needs to be added before it can illuminate; and as little can that be a perfect vehicle of truth which teaches nothing except to those who have already learned its lessons from another source. It is thus that Scripture is depreciated in the estimation of men by this doctrine of the need of an authoritative interpreter to unfold its meaning. It is thus that men are brought imperceptibly but surely to think far less of the divinely constructed medium of illumination, than of the fragment of coloured glass, without which they have been taught to believe that that illumination could not have reached them.

Perhaps in reply to this, it may be said, that the necessity of an authoritative interpreter does not arise from any defect in scripture, but solely from

man's weakness as a fallen creature. But what is *meant* by such an assertion? Not surely that man in consequence of his fallen condition is *physically* unable to comprehend a statement of divine truth; for if this were the case, it would furnish as strong an argument against the teaching of the truth by tradition, as against the use of scripture. Nor can it mean simply that man is disinclined to receive the truth which scripture teaches, for on the assumption that the truths taught by tradition are identical with those taught by scripture, this would apply as much against the utility of the former as against that of the latter. If the assertion have any meaning at all, it can only mean, that though scripture professes to be addressed to man in his fallen condition, for the purpose of conveying to him God's message of mercy, it is so little adapted to this end, that it cannot be safely entrusted to the unfettered perusal of the mass of mankind, lest it should mislead rather than guide them. What is this but in effect to deny the claim of scripture to be revered, as a perfect revelation of God's will to man?

Further, if this doctrine be embraced, it is apt to lead men to ask, Of what use after all is the written word? The answer which is given to this by those who contend for the authority of tradition is, that scripture *proves* that which the creeds of the church *teach*. Now, in one sense, this is assigning to scripture a real and valuable use; in another, it is put-

ting it in a position little elevated above that of some of the works of man. If by the teaching of the church be meant merely *hypothetical* teaching, *i.e.* the assertion of certain dogmas to be true, *provided* they be supported by scripture, I cannot see that the due honour of scripture is infringed by this assertion, though I should prefer for other reasons that it should be left to teach as well as to prove its own lessons. But if by the teaching of the church be intended the assertion of certain dogmas as true, *on the authority of the church*, and of which the *details* and *corroboratory* evidence may be found in Scripture, the conclusion to which every reflective mind must come, I think, is that whilst tradition is *the* great authoritative teacher, to whose words we must render unquestioning reverence, the Bible is a book which renders to our religious belief much the same service as is derived from an able exposition and defence, from the pulpit or the press, of the principles of our creed. Now, the latter meaning is that to which the traditionists, to be consistent with their principles, must stand. According to them, the teaching of the church is authoritative, not hypothetical. It carries the evidence of the truth of its own assertions within itself. It *needs* no appeal to any higher source of authority for what it inculcates. Its relation to scripture is not that of a subject to a sovereign, but that of one sovereign to another, of equal rank. Whilst, therefore, the Anglican ca-

tholics denounce the Romanists for *avowedly* placing tradition on a par with scripture, their own system seems *implicitly* to lead to the same conclusion. In both cases, the melancholy effect is to turn away the reverence of the people from the all-perfect word of God, and fix it upon the uncertain and unauthorised doctrines of men.

It is true that many who have received the teaching of tradition, nevertheless engage professedly in the interpretation of scripture. But upon their principles, what does this exercise become? Not the *inquiry* of a devout and submissive mind into the meaning of God's words, but the *putting upon* these words, by a mind already in its own esteem enlightened, of the ideas which it has been taught to believe *must* be there. This, strictly speaking, is not to interpret scripture, it is to dictate to scripture what its words ought to mean; and can hardly co-exist either with an honest love of truth for its own sake, or with that deep and reverential regard which is due from an ignorant and guilty creature to the word of the omniscient God. "He," says Hilary, "is the best reader who rather looks for the understanding of what is said from the words themselves, than imposes a meaning on them, receiving from them rather than bringing to them, and who does not force on the words the appearance of containing what before he read them he presumed must be intended. When therefore the discourse is of the

things of God, let us yield to God the knowledge of his own, and wait on his words with pious reverence.”¹

On a review of what has been advanced in this chapter, it will I trust be found that the following things have been substantiated :—

1. That there is no evidence whatever of the existence in the apostolic church of a formula of religious belief by which the written scriptures were to be interpreted.

2. That supposing such a document to have existed, it is now irrecoverably lost, and therefore altogether unimportant to us.

3. That the deference to be rendered to the unanimous consent of the early Christian Fathers upon any point of doctrine, is not different in kind from that which is due to the concurrence of any large body of enlightened Christian men.

4. That the claim of all men to read and interpret the Bible for themselves is reasonable, necessary, and scriptural, and that the conscientious exercise of this right is alone compatible with due reverence for the word of God, and due regard to our own proficiency in divine truth.

¹ De Trinit. lib. i.

If these conclusions be admitted, a point of first-rate importance is gained against the advocates of catholicism. The question between them and us becomes henceforward simply one of "What saith the scripture?" The "dark, bushy, tangled Forest" of Antiquity, in which, to use the words of Milton,¹ "they would imbosc," must be exchanged for "the plain field of Scripture," where we shall behold them in their real proportions, and meet them upon terms, from which neither party, if conscious of a single desire for truth, needs to shrink.

The conclusions above announced are valuable also, as they tend to impress upon us the duty of personally using as well as vindicating the right of private judgment in the matter of religion. It behoves every man to be satisfied in his own mind, "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." If the Bible be of divine authorship,—if it contain all truth necessary for our salvation,—if it address its doctrines to us individually,—and if it be our privilege each one for himself, to use it "as a light to his feet and a lamp to his path," it becomes us to reserve our submission in religious matters to it alone, to repudiate all attempts to fasten upon us the chain of human authority, and (if I may without offence use again the strong but picturesque language of our great poet,) to count that both to ourselves and to it "we

¹ Of Reformation touching Church Discipline in England. Works, vol. i. p. 26. Lond. 1806.

do injuriously in thinking to taste better the pure evangelic manna by seasoning our mouths with the tainted scraps and fragments of an unknown table ; and searching among the verminous and polluted rags, dropt overworn from the toiling shoulders of Time, with those deformedly to quilt and interlace the entire, the spotless, the undecaying robe of Truth, the daughter not of Time but of Heaven, only bred up here below in Christian hearts, between two grave and holy nurses, the Doctrine and the Discipline of the Gospel.”¹

¹ Of Prelatical Episcopacy. Works, vol. i. p. 67.

CHAPTER III.

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Ὁπου ἂν ᾖ Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς ἐκεῖ ἡ καθολικὴ Ἐκκλησία.

“Wherever Jesus Christ is there is the Catholic Church.”—*IGNATIUS in Ep. ad Smyrnæos*, cap. 8.

“Ubi Ecclesia ibi et Spiritus Dei; et ubi Spiritus Dei illic Ecclesia et omnis gratia.”

“Where the Church is there also is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is there is the Church and all grace.”—*IRENÆUS in Lib. 3, Adv. Hær.*

Πανήγυρις ἐστὶ πνευματικὴ ἡ Ἐκκλησία τοῦ Θεοῦ.

“A spiritual convocation is the Church of God.”—*CHRYSOSTOM, in Hom. 32, in Genes.*

EVERY person who is even slightly acquainted with the writings of catholics, whether Romanist or Anglican, must be aware of the important place assigned in their system of opinions to the doctrine of “The Church.” Around this doctrine, in fact, as around a nucleus, all their peculiar views cluster; upon it their manifold assumptions of authority and supremacy rest. Within their communion it is the great watch-word of their confederacy; without their communion it is the chosen war-cry with which they rush to the assault of all opposing

systems, whether of infidelity or of what "they call heresy." All this renders it the more necessary that we should scrupulously examine how far their doctrine concerning the church is correct, by an appeal to scripture for the purpose of determining from its unerring statements what ideas may justly be included under this phrase, and what have been erroneously and injuriously forced upon it.

My readers are requested at the outset to bear in mind that I am not now about to enter upon any question of internal church order or government. To do so would be altogether aside from my present purpose, which is to examine a doctrine that does not depend for its foundation *necessarily* upon any particular form of church polity. I am about to inquire not "what is, or what is not, *a* church?" but "what is *the* church?" Every reader of the New Testament must be familiar with this distinction. We read there of churches at Jerusalem, at Antioch, at Corinth, at Rome, &c.; but no person for a moment confounds such language with that for instance in Eph. i. 22, or Coloss. i. 18, or imagines that what is there called "*the* church," is nothing more than one of these local communities. The body referred to in these passages is plainly something more comprehensive in its extent and more imposing in its nature than any single church; and though the same term is applied to both, yet it is in such a manner as causes no confusion or difficulty to the intelligent

reader.¹ Leaving out of view for the present, then, all consideration of the peculiar constitution of these local churches—allowing each reader to hold his own opinion concerning them, according as he may think them to have been episcopalian, presbyterian, or congregational in their basis—the object on which I would concentrate my remarks is *The Church*, that which is in these passages said to be “the body of Christ,” and “the fulness of him who filleth all in all.”

The question between the catholics and their opponents on this subject has been stated in one of the *Tracts for the Times* in the following words:—“Now what do we conceive is meant by the one Catholic and Apostolic Church? As people vaguely take it in the present day, it seems only an assertion that there is a number of sincere Christians scattered through the world. . . . Doubtless the only true and satisfactory meaning is that which our divines have ever taken, that there is on earth an existing Society, Apostolic as founded by the Apostles, Catholic because it spreads its branches in every place, *i. e.*, the church visible, with its Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.”² The concluding words of this extract might lead some to suppose that the government of the church by bishops, priests, and deacons, was held by this writer to be an essential element in his conception of the

¹ See APPENDIX, Note J.

² Tract No. ii. p. 2.

church. That this is not the case, however, but that all he means by the latter clause is, that duly appointed officers should preside over the church, (which officers he of course as an episcopalian believes to be bishops, priests, and deacons,) is obvious from the following passage in a subsequent tract. After quoting the words of our Lord, "Who then is a faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household,"¹ &c., the writer adds, "Now, I do not inquire *who* in every age are the stewards spoken of, though in my own mind I cannot doubt the line of bishops is that ministry," &c. Again, after quoting the passage, "Obey them that have the rule over you,"² he says, "I do not ask *who* these are, but whether this is not a duty, however it is to be fulfilled, which multitudes in no sense fulfil." And he sums up the whole statement of his case thus:—"You will observe I am not arguing for this or that form of Polity, or for the Apostolical Succession, but simply for the duties of order, union, ecclesiastical gifts, and ecclesiastical obedience."³ By "the church," then, these writers understand a great visible incorporation placed under proper rule, and comprehending within its jurisdiction all who can legitimately call themselves Christians.

With regard to the statement of opinion on the

¹ Matt. xxiv. 45.

² Heb. xiii. 17.

³ Tract No. xi. pp. 6, 7.

opposite side, contained in the passage above-quoted, it does not appear to me so much incorrect as defective. By the phrase “the church,” *we* mean not merely that there are a number of sincere Christians scattered through the world, but that all such stand in a common relationship to Christ as the great Head of the church, and in connection with each other as members of the same spiritual body—brethren in the same holy family. Nor do we confine the term *church* to the body of believers still on the earth. Such we regard as only one part of the church, the other part being composed of those who have already gotten the victory over the world, the devil, and the flesh, and entered into the glory and the joy of the heavenly state. This great community of the faithful of all times, and from all countries, appears to us alone worthy of the title of the Holy Catholic Church of Christ, or, to use scriptural language, “the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven.

Now, it needs but a glance at these two statements of opinion to satisfy any one that the whole substance of the controversy between them must turn upon one point, viz., *whether “the church” be a visible or an invisible community*; in other words, whether, when we affirm the existence of a body called the church, we use the term *body* and the term *church* to denote an *actual, perceptible, and definite* incorporation of persons, or only as signifying a multitude of indi-

viduals, so linked together by common principles, feelings, and duties, as to be capable of being thought of by us *as if they were* an incorporation. Abstracting from this consideration, a series of propositions embracing the whole doctrine concerning the church, might be laid down, to which both catholics and anti-catholics would assent. Both agree that the church has an actual existence; both speak of it as a body; both maintain its sanctity, its unity, its catholicity, its security, its permanency; and both declare it to be the place of order, of peace, and of subordination. It is not until we introduce the element of *visibility* into the question that we find that these two parties, though agreeing in words, have all the while been thinking of two totally different things, and consequently, have agreed only in appearance and not in reality. On this point, then, the hinge of this controversy turns; and to this, therefore, it behoves us in the first instance to bend our attention.

In proceeding to this investigation, I gladly accept the challenge of the writer from whom I have already quoted. "Let us join issue," he says, "on this plain ground, whether or not the doctrine of the church, and the duty of obeying it, be laid down *in scripture*. If so," he justly adds, "it is no matter as regards our practice, whether the doctrine is primary or secondary, whether the duty is much or little insisted on. A Christian mind will aim at obey-

ing the *whole* council and will of God.”¹ These are admirable sentiments, and need only to be fully acted on to bring to a speedy conclusion the greater part of the controversies which divide Christians. In the present case it will, I think, be no very difficult matter to ascertain on which side the authority of scripture lies.

The phrase, “the visible church,” is one which men of all parties are in the habit of using, without, perhaps, very carefully inquiring what it means, or upon what authority it rests. In the case of the catholics, a sufficiently clear and definite idea is attached to the word; but it has always appeared to me that consistency requires those who are not catholics to banish this expression from their ecclesiastical phraseology, I find it difficult to conceive what meaning can, in the case of the latter, be justly affixed to the phrase. It cannot mean the aggregate of all the denominations of Christians throughout the world, because in no sense whatever, divided as they are into separate communions, can they be called the *visible* church, *i. e.* a body whose unity and fellowship are externally perceptible by all. On the other hand, it will not do for such to restrict the appellation to the members of their *own* denomination, for this would be to proceed on the principle of the catholics, with whom the visible church is synony-

¹ Tract No. xi, p. 2.

mous with their own communion, beyond which they cannot recognise any as members of the true church of Christ on earth. I cannot help thinking that, in this case, as in some others, protestants too generally have, unconsciously to themselves, been nursing in their bosoms the germ of catholicism, and from not persisting in bringing every thing to the infallible test of scripture, have become so that "they cannot see afar off, and have forgotten that they were purged from their old sins."¹

When scripture is appealed to on this point, it will perhaps surprise many to find how little there is in the New Testament that has even the semblance of giving support to this doctrine of the visibility of Christ's universal church on earth. Beyond a few passages which I shall proceed to examine immediately, the whole tenor and spirit of the New Testament is opposed to this doctrine, and goes rather to show that the church of Christ is a *spiritual* and not an *outward* incorporation—an *invisible* and not a *visible* society—an union in short of regenerated souls *as souls*, and not of *persons* merely *professing* to be regenerated.

I shall take the passages adduced by catholics in support of their doctrine in the order in which they occur in the New Testament. The first is Matthew v. 14, "Ye are the light of the world; a city that

¹ 2 Pet. i. 9.

is set on an hill cannot be hid." Now, no one can deny, that here it is expressly taught, that Christians are to be conspicuous as the lights of the world, and as a city built on a hill, which cannot be hid. The question, however, still remains, *How* are they to become thus conspicuous? By what means is their light to be displayed? Is it by forming themselves into a great confederated body, that shall draw to it the notice, and perhaps the fear of the rest of mankind? Of this the context gives no hint. Is it, then, by each individual Christian in his own sphere presenting to those around him a living embodiment of those purifying truths, which, as a Christian, he professes to believe, and a bright exemplification of those features of character which, as a follower of the sinless Jesus, he ought continually to exhibit? This surely is the more probable interpretation of the passage; and it is that which the context, I apprehend, directly sanctions. What says Christ himself in explanation of his own words? Continuing his discourse, he says, at ver. 16, "Let your light *so* (*οὕτως*) shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." In these words our Lord himself announces to us the way in which we are to be the light of the world, viz. by exhibiting individually our good works to the view of men, that they may see and admire our consistency, and glorify our Father who is in heaven. Instead, then, of in any degree authorising

the doctrine of the necessary visibility of the church, this passage of our Lord's discourse is only a striking exhortation to the duty of *individual* purity, piety, and consistency on the part of his people.¹

It may perhaps occur to some, however, to argue from this passage thus: "If it be the duty of each individual Christian to make his Christianity conspicuous, does not this necessarily involve the conspicuity of the whole, as one combined mass of light, seeing that all are truly united as members of the same family?" Now, at first sight this reasoning may appear to be conclusive; but a little reflection will, I think, serve to render manifest the fallacy which it involves. It is to be observed, that to affirm that the whole number of Christians are persons of illustrious character, is not the same thing as to affirm that they are illustrious *as a whole*. Each member of a society may be conspicuous in the view of the world for certain features, and yet the society itself, as a society, be utterly private, invisible, unknown. Or, to keep by our Lord's own illustration: Each planet in our solar system is a visible luminary; but the solar system itself which these planets compose is invisible. We all see the planets, and we may conceive to ourselves an *idea* of

¹ When it suits their purpose, catholics themselves can perceive that this is the meaning of the passage. "Loquitur dominus," says Bellarmine, "de luce exemplorum probitatis et morum, voluit enim apostolos esse quaedam exempla sanctitatis omnibus hominibus ad imitandum proposita."—*De Verbo Dei*, iii. 2.

the whole system as such ; but to see it is impossible to any one resident on this earth, or on any other of the planets. So is it, I take it, with the Christian church. Each believer is a star, a light in the world ; and the whole body forms one glorious system. Of each of these, or of each small company of them, we can take cognizance ; but of the system, of the body, of the whole, as such, we can take no cognizance. *That* stands patent to the Omniscient eye of the Father of the family alone.

The next passage to be considered is Matt. xvi. 18, where our Lord thus addresses Peter : “ And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, [or rock], and upon this rock will I build my church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Now, in remarking on this passage, I shall lose no time in disputing the meaning of those parts of it which do not essentially concern the present subject of inquiry. Let it be conceded that the rock upon which Christ says he should build his church was the apostle Peter, in whatever sense such a declaration may be legitimately understood. Let it be conceded also, that the church so built is to endure for ever, undestroyed by all the assaults of its most determined enemies. It still remains for us to inquire, *what* it is of which our Saviour thus speaks as his church : Whether is it an outward visible institution, or an invisible, spiritual association ? The former seems to be very generally taken for granted, as a

thing about which there can be little dispute. But why so? What is there to *fix* our Lord's words to this meaning? Shall it be said that it was in this way that the prediction was actually fulfilled; and that as the fulfilment of a prediction affords always the best illustration of its meaning, we are bound to attach the meaning in question to our Lord's words on this occasion? I reply, that admitting the soundness of the *principle* of interpretation here laid down, I question the accuracy of its alleged application in the case before us. Is it quite certain that it was by the erection of an outward visible society that our Lord's prediction concerning Peter was fulfilled? Let us inquire when and where this society was formed. According to the Romanist view, it was when Peter became the acknowledged primate of the apostles, and head of the catholic church; that is, at a period which never has yet been discovered, and on the occasion of an event which cannot be shown ever to have occurred.¹ The protestant view, on the other hand, assumes the fulfilment of the prediction on the day of Pentecost, when, by Peter's preaching, so large a multitude was converted to Christ. This, I have no doubt, is the correct view of the matter; but where, I ask, is there in this any authority for the supposition, that in our Lord's prediction to Peter it was of an externally

¹ See Barrow on the Pope's Supremacy. Works, vol. vii. p. 207. (Hughes' ed.)

visible confederacy, and not merely of the invisible spiritual church that he spoke? It cannot be denied; that by the preaching of Peter on the occasion referred to, the interests of the church spiritual were greatly promoted; whilst, on the other hand, there is not the shadow of evidence that any institution was then set up at all answering to the idea of the visible catholic church. It may be even doubted whether a church of any kind, formally constituted, had at that time existence. All that we learn from the history is the simple fact of a number of converts being made from Judaism to Christianity, who naturally associated together for mutual advantage and influence. Subsequently, indeed, in the same chapter, we read of the church as that to which God added those who were saved; but it remains to be proved that this was a visibly organized body, still more that it was an institution possessing the character and the pretensions ascribed by catholics to the visible church. To my mind, the phraseology, "the Lord added daily to the church the saved,"¹ conveys the idea of an increase, not to any visibly existing institution, the more especially as none such had been previously mentioned, but to the mass of

¹ Ὁ δὲ Κύριος προσετίθει τοὺς σωζομένους καθ' ἡμέραν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ. Acts ii. 47. There are considerable variations of reading in the different MSS. in regard to this clause. Some, including the important Codex B., and many of the ancient versions, omit τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ; and so the text has been edited by Lachmann. Mill and Bengel also contend for the omission of these words, and Griesbach says, "forsitan delenda."

those whom he, the Omniscient, knew and recognised as the assembly of the redeemed, the invisible body of Christ. Be this, however, as it may, there is nothing to prove that Peter, on the day of Pentecost, founded the catholic church, as a visible body; whilst there is everything to authorise the conclusion, that in the multitude of spiritual converts which his first sermon was the means of bringing to Christ, was found the fulfilment of Christ's prediction concerning him. Upon the principle, then, that, in the fulfilment of a prediction, we have the best commentary on its meaning, we are justified in concluding, that the church which Christ said he would build upon Peter was his spiritual body, and not an outward ecclesiastical confederacy. This conclusion is farther confirmed by the two following considerations:—1. When we come to inquire in what sense Christ's church could be built upon his apostle, we naturally turn to other passages in which the same phraseology is employed, for an explanation. Now, in writing to the Ephesians, (ii. 20–22,) Paul says, “Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” The meaning of this passage plainly is, that the Ephesian Christians, though formerly, as Paul tells them

in the preceding context, “ aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise,” had been, by their reception of what the apostles and prophets had testified concerning Christ, brought into a state of holy fellowship with the entire household of God. But was this fellowship of an external or of an internal kind? Obviously the latter; for what external visible fellowship had these Ephesians with the holy men of former times—the Israel of God under the ancient dispensation? or what with myriads of true believers who have since lived, and become with them members of the family of God? Moreover, of what is it that the apostle speaks when he says, that it is to be an habitation of God through the Spirit? Is it some great earthly incorporation, into which, for aught that can be done to prevent it, there may be gathered all sorts of persons, and in which there may come to be a time, when every foul and unclean bird shall have its nest? Or is it that fair and sinless church, which, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, shall be presented to Christ at last, as his chosen and eternal bride? No candid reader of scripture surely can hesitate in such a case. The latter is plainly the only admissible supposition. But if that which Paul here tells us is built upon the foundation of the apostles, is the *spiritual* church, does it not fairly follow, that that which Christ said he would build upon Peter as the leader of the apos-

ties must have been the same?—2. In the verse immediately following, Christ goes on to say to Peter, “And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,” &c. Now, whatever may be meant by the term *keys* here, or by the power of binding and loosing mentioned in the latter part of the verse, no one will, I think, dispute, that the phrase “kingdom of heaven,” is synonymous with that church which Christ was to build on Peter. The church, then, is the kingdom of heaven, and the kingdom of heaven is the church. Now, what is the kingdom, or, as Dr Campbell well renders it, the reign of heaven, so often spoken of in the New Testament? Is it a visible or an invisible institution? Let our Lord himself answer the question. “The kingdom of heaven cometh *not with observation*; neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for behold the kingdom of God *is within you*.”¹ The kingdom, or church of God, is thus distinctly set before us, as not a visible institution, but a spiritual power—a something which has its seat in the hearts of men, and which may exist in the midst of a community as it did in the days of our Lord, in the midst of these carnal Pharisees, and yet men perceive it not. This seems to me to afford unanswerable evidence in favour of the conclusion, that the church which Christ said he would build on Peter, as an apostle, was an

¹ Luke xvii. 20, 21. Comp. Kuinoel’s note on the passage, and Bloomfield’s Lexicon under *παρουσία*.

institution of a purely spiritual kind. Instead, then, of supporting the doctrine, that Christ's church is a visible corporation, this passage would rather seem to point to an opposite conclusion.

The passage next in order is Matt. xviii. 17, where our Lord, in giving directions for the management of cases of offence between brethren, directs, that after private admonition has failed to bring the offender to penitence, his conduct must be reported to the *church*. Now from this it is argued, that by the church a visible institution is here meant, else how could the fault of the transgressor be *told* to the church? Of this there can be no doubt. The only question is, Does the church here mentioned mean the church universal, or the particular community of which the parties were members? If the latter, then it affords no evidence whatever on the point now under discussion; for the question now before us respects not the constitution of particular assemblies or congregations of Christians, but the alleged visibility of the whole church or assembly of believers on earth. If the former, how, I ask, is the offended party to proceed in telling the conduct of the offender to the church? Must he call a synod or council of the whole church all over the world? Must that council be summoned every time that two Christians in any part of the world quarrel, and cannot settle their own dispute? And must men travel over half the globe, it may be, to the place where

the august council meets, to lodge their complaint—a complaint which, after all, as often, alas! does happen, may have no deeper cause than the tales of an idle gossip, whose tongue has escaped from the control alike of good sense and Christian principle? No person, I suppose, will contend for such kind of “order” as this in the church of Christ; and yet how is the command of our Lord to be obeyed otherwise, if by the body, to which he says we are to tell our complaint, be meant the universal church? It must be quite obvious, that this passage either proves nothing in favour of the catholic doctrine of the necessary visibility of Christ’s church, or proves more than any catholic is prepared to contend for or admit.

Passing over a number of passages in which, like the last, the reference is obviously to the particular society of which the parties referred to were members, I come to what may be considered the palladium of the doctrine I am now assailing,—1 Tim. iii. 15. In this passage Paul, after having given some directions to Timothy concerning the two offices in a Christian church,—that of bishop, and that of deacon,—adds, (as the passage stands in the common version,) “These things I write unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” From these words it is argued, in reference to the subject

now before us, 1st, That as Timothy's behaviour was an outward thing, that in connection with which it was to be exhibited, viz., the church, must be a visible institution; and, 2d, That we can understand the assertion, that "the church is the pillar and ground of the truth," in no other sense, than that the church, as a visibly existing institute, is designed to be the great bulwark and support of Christian truth on the earth. Let us examine both of these inferences in order.

With regard to the former, I observe, 1st, That even conceding the conclusiveness of the inference from the apostle's words, as to the visible character of that in relation to which Timothy's conduct is spoken of, it would not necessarily follow, that the church of Christ universal is a visible body. There are *two* ways, it will be at once seen, in which such an inference may be used. If we assume, *a priori*, that the house of God, or the church of God, here spoken of, is *the universal church*, the passage may be used to prove, that that church is a visible body. On the other hand, if we assume that the church universal *is not, and cannot be a visible body*, the passage may be used to show, that that of which Paul here speaks was not the church universal, but some particular church,—say that of Ephesus,—of which Timothy was president. It thus appears, that each party may make the passage speak in its favour by simply assuming what each has in this controversy

to prove. The catholic, by taking for granted that it is the universal church which is here referred to, passes at once to the conclusion, that this must be a visible institute. With equal justice his opponent may take it for granted, that the church catholic is not a visible body, and hence argue, that it is not of that at all that Paul is here discoursing. Unless, then, it be determined which of these assumptions is the true one, the passage must be passed by as deciding definitively for neither party. I observe, therefore, *2dly*, That the presumption is against the catholic interpretation, inasmuch as it is difficult to understand, upon the hypothesis that Paul here refers to the church universal, in what way his injunctions to Timothy could be complied with. These injunctions respect the proper persons to be constituted bishops and deacons. Now it is easy to understand how Timothy could obey these in relation to one, or two, or more churches in that district in which he was placed; but what meaning to attach to them in relation to the church universal, one is at a loss to conceive. If it be said, that all that is meant by the expression is, that Paul had thus written to Timothy, in order that the latter might know how to conduct himself as became such a functionary in the universal church, my reply is, that this does not meet the case, for the question is not, *How* does Paul say that it became Timothy to act? but, *How* could it *be possible* for him, or for any

one, to act in the way mentioned in relation to the church universal? Let us suppose that Timothy was a diocesan bishop, and that the purport of Paul's exhortation to him was to instruct him how a bishop should conduct himself; it is obvious that the question still remains, Where, or within what sphere, was this conduct to be exhibited? The apostle says, "within the church of God." Now this was either the church universal, or it was a part of it,—say Timothy's diocese. If the latter, then the expression in question affords no proof that the universal church of God is a visible institute, for no one will maintain, that a diocese, however large, is the universal church. If the former, then let it be shown what the apostle's injunction means, and how it can be fulfilled,—in other words, let it be shown how a bishop can exercise his functions in the universal church. I know of only one way in which this can be done, viz., by constituting, after the fashion of the Romanists, one bishop the pope or head of the universal church. Such an officer, certainly, would sustain an official relation to the whole church; but that Timothy was such an officer, it will suit neither Romanist nor Anglican to affirm: not the Romanist, because this would overturn the claims of Peter and Rome to the supremacy, and set up those of Timothy and of Ephesus; not the Anglican, because it would force upon him the troublesome and unwelcome doctrine, that there ought to be a supreme head,—a

universal bishop over the whole church. But if it cannot be shown in what sense Timothy could be called to exercise his functions in the church universal, does not the presumption arise, that it is not of the church universal at all, but of the particular community of Christians with which Timothy at this time stood connected, that Paul here speaks? *3dly*, This presumption rises to certainty, when we look at the original, and find that the words, in place of being *definite*, as our translators have made them, are *indefinite*, and that, consequently, the proper rendering of the passage is, "that thou mightest know how to conduct thyself in a house of God that is a church (or congregation) of the living God."¹ This deprives the passage of its supposed reference to the church universal, and brings it directly and easily into harmony with the whole tenor of Paul's admonitions to Timothy. It would appear, that this distinguished individual had been commissioned by the apostle to visit certain districts in which there were Christian churches, and there set in order the things that were wanting. Among other things, he had to appoint in these churches proper officers for the superintendence of their affairs; and in order that he might do so on correct principles, Paul, in this chapter, details the necessary qualifications for bishops and deacons, — the only two church officers

¹ ἵνα ἰδῇς πῶς δεῖ ἐν οἴκῳ Θεοῦ ἀναστρέφεισθαι, ἥτις ἐστὶν ἐκκλησία Θεοῦ ζῶντος.

of whom the early churches knew anything. After this, he, in the verse under consideration, tells Timothy his reason for having given him these details, viz., that when called upon in any church to ordain office-bearers, he might know how to behave himself in the matter, so as to act for the real welfare of the church. This appears to me the simple, the natural, the necessary interpretation of this passage, — a passage on which more, perhaps, than on any other the doctrine of a visible catholic church has been built.

As respects the latter part of the verse, in which, as many suppose, it is affirmed, that the church is called “the pillar and ground of the truth,” I have two remarks, in reference to our present object, to submit to the candid consideration of the reader. In the 1st place, Supposing it proved that “the church” here spoken of is the church universal, and admitting, for the sake of argument, that it is of it that Paul affirms that it is the pillar and ground of the truth, still it will not from all this follow that the church universal is a visible institution. For in what sense can the church be said to be the pillar and ground of the truth? The answer commonly given is, that Christ has committed to his church the duty of defending, supporting, and propagating Christianity in the world. Now adopting this, does it, I ask, at all follow, that that to which this duty has been entrusted is of necessity an outward visible

incorporation? May not Christians, in their *individual* capacity, or *congregations* of Christians united in holy fellowship, act thus without resorting to the expedient of a vast outward confederacy? It may be said, they cannot do it so well separately, as when formed into a catholic church. Of that I have strong doubts; but supposing it were so, let it not be forgotten, that the question is not at present, which is the *better* way of discharging this duty; but whether the plan of universal visible confederation be the *only* way? The affirmative of this it is imperative on catholics to prove; for unless they can show that it is impossible for any but a catholic church to support and propagate Christianity, — a position which will hardly, I think, be maintained, which certainly can never be maintained successfully, — it will still be competent for us to affirm, that what the apostle here refers to is the body of Christians as such, really though invisibly united to each other, and concerned in common for the principles which in common they hold. But I observe, *2dly*, That it is by no means clear that the church *is* that of which Paul here affirms, that it is the pillar and ground of the truth. In the opinion of many of our first-rate critics, these words belong to the next verse, and refer to the mystery of godliness, so that the whole should be read thus, — “A pillar and ground of the truth, and confessedly great is the mystery of godliness,” &c. So the passage stands in the critical

editions of Bengel, Griesbach, Knapp, Heinrichs, and Scholz. In favour of this arrangement of the apostle's words, it may be observed, 1st, That the words, "a pillar and ground of the truth," can describe nothing less than that which lies at the basis of the truth,—that on which it rests,—that by which it is upheld. It is a mere shrinking from a meaning which would be too strong for the purpose for which the passage is adduced, to try to explain away these words as meaning merely, that to the church has been entrusted the duty of supporting and extending Christianity. A defender of the truth is in no sense a foundation on which the truth rests. The truth must have its basis independent of its defenders, and on that basis the defenders themselves must rest, else all attempts to defend it will prove abortive. To join these words, then, with the 15th verse, is to make the apostle affirm, that the church is the basis and support of Christian truth. But is this correct? is it even intelligible? Is not the converse of this, that the truth is the basis of the church, what all scripture teaches us to receive? 2dly, If we join these words with verse 16th, in the manner proposed, the statement of the apostle will be, that the doctrine concerning the incarnation, work, and triumph of Christ, is the basis and pillar of Christian truth. This is a sentiment perfectly intelligible, perfectly true, and perfectly in accordance with the whole testimony of Scripture. It, there-

fore, demands for the arrangement of the apostle's words, by which it is brought out, a preference over that arrangement which would make him utter a sentiment having no such recommendations. *3dly*, Philological considerations are in favour of the arrangement which joins these words with verse 16th. It is not usual for the copulative conjunction to commence a *new* paragraph or section, having no connection with that which precedes, as would be the case here were the common reading retained. On the other hand, there is no force in the objection which Schleiermacher (aiming at a disproof of the genuineness of the whole epistle) urges against the proposed arrangement, viz., "that with two predicates, such as *στύλος* ['pillar'] and *ἐδραίωμα*, ['ground,'] the purely adjectival expression *ὁμολογουμένως μέγα* ['confessedly great'] cannot be joined as the third; as even the worst writer would have said, 'The prop of all truth is this avowedly great mystery.'"¹ This is a fair specimen of the kind of criticism which often passes among Germans as of mighty avail in showing the spuriousness of the sacred books. It is quite unworthy of the great name of its author. The assertion that an adjectival predicate cannot be joined with a substantival, is altogether gratuitous. There is no idiom of the language violated by such an arrange-

¹ Ueber den sogenannten ersten brief des Paulos an dem Timotheos, U.S.W. S. 197. Berlin. 1807.

ment, and the sense brought out by it is clear and consistent. Had there been any assignable reason against it, Schleiermacher would not have contented himself with a mere unsupported assertion that it was inadmissible. As regards his closing remark, it plainly proceeds on the assumption, that the acknowledged greatness of the mystery was rather a thing the apostle should have taken for granted, than have formally affirmed. But why so? Can it be shown that there was no need for the apostle to affirm, that the mystery of godliness was avowedly great, as well as that it was the pillar and ground of the truth? The sentence which Schleiermacher has constructed for the apostle, plainly conveys a meaning which, if not different from, comes very short of that which Paul's own words, as they stand, express; and none but a very poor writer indeed would, meaning to inform his readers that the mystery of godliness was a prop of the truth *and* avowedly great, have contented himself with saying, "the avowedly great mystery is a prop of the truth."

4thly, It is accordant with Jewish usage to call any great doctrine of religion a basis and pillar of truth. Of this the reader will find evidence in Schoetgen's note on this passage in his *Horæ Hebræicæ et Talmudicæ*. So that the apostle, in using this phraseology, accommodates, as is his wont, expressions in common use among his countrymen,—and which must, from his early education, have been quite

familiar to his mind,—to the subjects which, as an apostle of Jesus Christ, it was his business to teach and to preach.

On these grounds the proposed alteration in the punctuation of these verses seems worthy of being adopted. We shall then, to use the words of Whately, “obtain a sense clearly intelligible, easily accordant with the context, and consistent with the general tenor of Scripture, instead of being the reverse.”¹ We shall also be justified in concluding that this vaunted bulwark of the doctrine, that the catholic church of Christ is necessarily one visible body, gives that doctrine no real sanction or solid support.²

From the examination of these passages, which comprise all those usually adduced by the catholics in defence of their dogma of the visibility of the church, I trust it has been made apparent that that dogma is indebted for any favour it has met with, rather to the zeal and confidence with which it has been asserted, than to any scriptural authority which can be pleaded in its support. I may venture to go a step farther, and express a hope, that it has also

¹ Essays on the Dangers to Christian Faith, &c., p. 176.

² See Cameroni Myrothecium *in loc.*; Gatakeri Cinnus, p. 399, Lond. 1651; Flatt's Vorlesungen ueb. d. Pastoralbriefe *in loc.* Tüb. 1831; Doddridge *in loc.*, &c. Though all the later Fathers are in favour of the common punctuation of these verses, it was not so apparently that Irenæus understood the passage, for he expressly affixes the phrase “pillar and ground of the truth,” to “the gospel,” twice over.—Adv. Haer. lib. iii., c. 1, and c. 11.

suggested grounds for the positive maintenance of the opposite position, viz., that what Scripture calls "the church of Christ, or of God," is the vast body of the redeemed at any time existing in the universe of God, whether they be in earth or heaven. If the church of Christ be identical with "the reign of God or of heaven,"—concerning which it is said, that "it is within men;" that it "is not of this world;" that "it cometh not with observation;" that it "is not meat or drink, but righteousness, and joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost,"¹—what can be concluded concerning it, but that it is a purely spiritual association, the members of which are linked together by no other than spiritual bonds, and whose interests are to be promoted by no other than spiritual means? And if, again, the church of God be that which is "built upon the foundation of prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone,"—if it be the place where the whole body of the redeemed, whether Jews or Gentiles, meet together in a common fellowship,—if it be the abode of the family of God, of which it is said, that it is partly in heaven and partly on earth,²—and if it be that in which God dwells by his Spirit; how can it be a mere outward visible confederacy upon earth, comprising men collected together by mere outward means, and exhibiting all varieties of character, dis-

¹ Luke xii. 20, 21; John xvii. 36; Rom. xiv. 17.

² Eph. iii. 15.

position, and conduct? There is surely such a discrepancy here between the representations of scripture and the doctrines of catholicism, as should lead all who hold the latter, anew to examine their principles by the unerring standard of the divine word.

The conclusion at which these statements point will be still farther confirmed, if we examine certain other passages in which mention is made of the church universal, but of which the advocates of the visible church system do not seem inclined to take notice. Of these I shall content myself with noticing a few of the more striking, and these in classes, rather than separately. The first class comprehends those which speak of the church *as the body of which Christ is the head*. To this belong Ephes. i. 22, 23, Coloss. i. 18, and a multitude of other passages in the New Testament. In these Christ is represented as exalted to the throne of his glory, and in this capacity maintaining the relation of head over all things to "the church, which is his body, the fulness (or complement) of him who filleth all in all." Now, the point to be ascertained is, in what sense is Christ the head, and the church the body? for upon the determination of this, will, in great measure, depend the determination of the question whether the church thus spoken of be a visible or an invisible association. Here, I think, there can be no great room for doubt. When Christ is said to be the head of the church, the meaning obviously is, that he

stands to the church in a relation analogous to that in which the head stands to the other parts of the human frame; that is, he is supreme over it,—his law is its guide, and he is the source of all its blessings. Now, to what is it, or to whom, that Christ stands in this relation? Is it to this or that community of Christians confederated together on earth? If so, which of them is the true body? for as there is but one head, there cannot surely be many bodies. If it be replied that the catholic church is that body, I ask how can Christ be more a head to that body than to any other which owns his authority, obeys his law, and trusts to his grace? This is all that *can* be done by any body of Christians; and where this is done, there surely is a part, at least, of his body. It will not do to say that the catholic church is the only church which really obeys, fears, and trusts in Christ; for this would be quietly to assume the most important point at issue. Besides, even supposing this granted, it would still be competent for us to ask, does the visible catholic church on earth at any given time comprehend the *whole* of those ransomed sinners who form Christ's body, and to whom he is the author of grace and guidance? What, in this case, becomes of the mighty company who have already passed through the fires of tribulation, and have entered into the rest of their Lord? Are *they* no part of that body of which Christ is the head? Have they no interest in his grace? no re-

verence for his authority? no submission to his will? They surely must be admitted to form part of the church which is his body. But if so, that church must be essentially an invisible, spiritual society; for only of such a society can disembodied spirits form a part. This fact, that Christ is the head of the church, thus appears to bring the question of the necessary visibility of that church, as one body, to a very short issue. One of two things must be true in relation to this fact: The church must be the whole body of believers spiritually united to Christ and each other; or the saints in heaven must be excluded from that body, because between them and those on earth there can be no visible association. But the latter supposition is obviously false, and consequently the former alone remains for our adoption.

Even supposing, then, it were proved that only those who are catholics can be members of Christ's body, this would not prove that that body, as such, could become visible. The utmost it could effect would be to show, that of the spiritual, and therefore invisible body of Christ, only one section of professing Christians could become members, viz. the catholics. But this would not satisfy their claims, or meet their wishes. What they contend for is, that Christ is the head of their communion on earth; and for this also, many who are not catholics contend, with equal zeal, in relation to their own respective churches. Such a position seems to me not only unscriptural,

but absurd. I am at a loss as to the meaning in which the language is to be understood. A metaphor to be appropriate must be harmonious throughout. If one part of it be capable of one kind of explanation, and another of another, it becomes false and confusing. If, to take the case before us, we understand by the body an actual visible society on earth, and by the head an invisible spiritual ruler in heaven, are we not guilty of a gross incongruity of speech, and inaccuracy of language? Does it not commend itself to the common sense of every one that a visible body must have, of necessity, a visible head? Where is such a body that is without one? To keep ourselves within the church, where is the society, calling itself a church, which has not, in so far as it is a visible society, a visible head? In a single congregation the pastor is the visible head. In a presbytery or synod, the moderator, for the time being, as embodying in his own person the statutes by which the society have bound themselves, is the visible head. In an episcopal confederacy, the prime bishop, whatever title he may have, is the visible head. And where the attempt has been made to have an œcumenical church, it has been associated with the appointment of an œcumenical bishop, as the visible head of the whole. In the nature of things it cannot be otherwise. A visible body with an invisible head is a mere impossibility. The conception of such a thing can dwell only in an

imagination that cares little about congruity in its ideas. The headship of Christ over his universal church, as a spiritual body, is a consistent, as well as a delightful conception; but to speak of him as the head of a visible body, whether consisting of one congregation, or of many, seems to me an inaccuracy of thought and language which it would be desirable to avoid. This metaphorical representation of our Lord's relation to his people, can be interpreted congruously only when it is understood either all literally, or all spiritually; and as the personal absence of Christ from his people on earth forbids the literal interpretation of it, we are shut up to the spiritual interpretation of it. The church, therefore, of which Christ is emphatically said to be the head, must be regarded as no one mere visible body upon earth, but as the whole body of redeemed souls, whether on earth or in heaven, and with whatever party of Christians they may stand connected on earth.

Another class of passages relating to this subject consists of those in which the relation of Christ's sacrificial work to the church is spoken of. Of these the following may serve for an example. "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it, and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and with-

out blemish.”¹ Now, here the church obviously includes all those who shall be presented to Christ at last as his own, having been pardoned through his death, and sanctified by his word and Spirit. It cannot, therefore, mean any community visibly existing at any given period upon the earth, but must comprehend all those who, at whatever time they lived, have become partakers, in any way, of the benefits of Christ’s work. It may be said that as there is no salvation to any but those who are members of the catholic church, these are identical with those whom Christ loved; but even were this true, which it is not, still it would remain clear that the phrase, “the church,” is applied to a mass of persons, who never, as a whole, stood in visible fellowship and communion with each other, which is all that, in the present instance, we are concerned to prove from the passage.

In fine, the language of the apostle, when, in writing to the Hebrews, (xii. 21—24) he says of believers that they “have come to mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood

¹ Eph. v. 25—27.

of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel," must carry with it convincing evidence in support of the position I am now advocating. That to which such language, as is here used, is capable of being appropriated can be no mere ecclesiastical corporation located on earth; it can only be the vast company of the redeemed, embracing within its ample range both earth and heaven,—the saints who have come to it as their resting-place here below, no less than the spirits of the just already made perfect above. It were surely a miserable lowering of the meaning of such a passage to attempt to restrict it to a mere visible association of persons, many of whom, for aught that can be done to prevent it, may, in heart, be the enemies of the cross of Christ, and the objects of his righteous displeasure!

Such is the testimony of scripture concerning the question now under discussion. The doctrine which I have been endeavouring to support by its statements is that which the reformed churches have embodied in their standards, and which they felt themselves particularly called upon to maintain against the catholics, and to a certain extent against the Lutherans.¹ The controversy is not, as some may be ready to suspect, of minor moment. On the decision of it hangs, as I have already intimated, very weighty consequences, of a practical nature,—conse-

¹ See APPENDIX, Note K.

quences involving man's highest and dearest interests as an immortal and accountable creature. To a few of these it may not be unprofitable briefly to advert.

1. It is a certain truth of scripture, that beyond the pale of Christ's church there is no salvation. It is the church which Christ loved,—it is the church for which he gave himself,—it is the church which he shall alone present to himself at last. If a man, then, belong not to this church, he is none of his; and as without him there is no salvation, the man that is not of this church must live and die unsaved. This is a solemn consideration under any view of the church; but it becomes invested with very momentous peculiarities when it is held in connection with the doctrine of the visibility of the church. Salvation in that case becomes possible only when a man belongs to that outward visible corporation calling itself *the catholic church*. From this three great evils at least result. In the *first* place, men come to identify Christ's church with a certain party of religionists, and consequently to denounce as heretics and infidels all those who, whatever their faith, hope, and other Christian virtues, do not belong to that party. Of this we have examples sufficiently painful and numerous, not only in the fierce denunciations which the Romish church has uttered against all other communities, but in the cool and unhesitating manner in which the Anglican party consign all whom they do not regard as catholics, to the

ranks of those who stand beyond the pale of God's covenant and church.¹ A *second* evil is, that men come to regard mere connection with the body calling itself Christ's church as securing their salvation. The process of reasoning by which, from the given premises, this conclusion is reached, is short, simple, and natural. "All the members of the church of Christ must be saved; but the church of Christ is this visible communion of which we are members: therefore we must all be saved." Thus it is, that men are taught to deceive themselves, to lose sight of personal religion and individual salvation in the notion of corporate salvation, and to "go down to the grave with a lie in their right hand." That this consequence also of their system is not only not repudiated, but avowed and gloried in, the writings of catholics abundantly and distressingly show.² A *third* evil, (though by catholics looked on as a first-rate advantage,) is the superstitious and delusive sanctity thus thrown around "the church," and reflected from her upon the men who minister at her altars. "The church," to use the words of the excellent bishop of Chester,³ "has been made first an abstraction, then a person, and then a Saviour. The church thus invested with divinity, has the minister as her visible representative; and he, explaining the prophetic anticipation, has assumed the place of

¹ See APPENDIX, Note L.

² See APPENDIX, Note M.

³ Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Chester, 1841, p. 31.

God." A terrible power is thus placed in the hands of the church, and her ministers reverencing her as their "mother dear,"¹ and blessing her for the good she gives them, teach the people to bow down and reverence them as the exponents of her awful authority, the very image of her majesty. The church thus becomes the author of salvation to men; in other words, the clergy assume to themselves the keys of the house of God, and pretend to shut or open as it pleases them. In the meanwhile, the great and only Redeemer of the lost is kept out of sight. The church is all in all. Salvation is of the priesthood. And the poor sin-burdened penitent, sinking under a sense of his guilt, instead of being directed to that compassionate High Priest who is able to save to the uttermost, is told to look to the church,—to enter the bosom of the church,—to receive the rites and obey the ordinances of the church,—and to hope for salvation at last, because he has thus been a good and a dutiful child of the church. To any one who has the Bible in his hand, it must be unnecessary to say how directly all such views are opposed to its entire spirit and teaching, as well as full of danger to the eternal interests of all by whom they are embraced.

2. It is a scripture doctrine, that the church of

¹ " Did not the Gentile church find grace,
Our mother dear, this favoured day," &c.

Keble's Christian Year, p. 35.

Christ is and must be *one*. All its members are children of the same family,—parts of the same body,—stones of the same temple,—branches of the same vine. United to Christ as their head, they are through him indissolubly united to each other. No truth can be more delightful than this, when understood of the spiritual church of God. It brings us into conscious fellowship with all the redeemed of every age, and country, and party,—patriarchs, apostles, martyrs, saints. It teaches us to stretch out to every true believer the right hand of brotherhood and welcome. And it gives us an idea, than which there is none livelier, of the hallowed society of our Father's house in heaven, where, amidst differences of rank, intelligence, and glory, accompanied perhaps with differences of opinion on many points of intellectual investigation, there is the perpetual calm of an uninterrupted harmony, and the perfect joy of an unbroken brotherhood. But view this same doctrine in connection with the idea of the necessary visibility of the catholic church, and how changed are its aspect and its effects! The unity of a visible body must be visible unity,—that is, it must be *uniformity*. To be agreed on essentials is not enough for the members of such a body; every departure in doctrine or in ritual from the prescribed standard, though it may have no necessary tendency to destroy the bond which unites to Christ, and through him to

his people, yet interferes with the *visible manifestation* of unity, breaks the chain of *outward* coherence, and consequently is to be viewed as an evil of no less magnitude than actual apostacy or infidelity. To secure unbroken uniformity, therefore, no means must be left untried. Whatever can be effected by authority, by discipline, by excommunication, and it may be, by the pains and penalties of the civil power, must be done, rather than that the visible unity of Christ's church should be broken.¹ Unity of opinion must be enforced, by treating all as heretics who do not believe exactly as the church believes. Unity of practice must be secured, by treating all as schismatics who depart in any way from the formula which the church has sanctioned. Nor is this all, or even perhaps the worst. Whilst on the one hand, by thus formally excluding from the church of Christ many whom Christ himself hath received, they destroy the real unity of his body, they on the other hand introduce a spurious, a delusive unity, by professedly incorporating with the body of Christ all, of whatever character, who will only concur outwardly in all the ordinances of the church. How strikingly is this exemplified in the church of Rome! Whilst other Christian bodies uphold, in profession at least, the desirableness of purity of communion, she indignantly repudiates this as "prejudicial to the

¹ See Barrow's Discourse on the Unity of the Church, especially sect. 7.

faith," as "among the errors of Huss of damned memory, and plainly contradictory to the gospel,"¹ as well as incompatible with the visibility of the catholic church.² And what in consequence is the boasted unity of that church, but a mere figment of the imagination,—a thing that is said to be, but is not? "The church of Rome," says the great Leibnitz,³ "boasts wondrously of her unity. But I dare maintain, that that unity is not genuine; it is a mere semblance, got up by means of a sort of external political syncretism." If such be the fruits of this doctrine of the visibility of Christ's church, it is surely of the last importance that it should be repudiated, and that Christians should be content with maintaining the spiritual unity of the church as the invisible body of Christ, where members of all earthly churches and sects that "hold the Head," meet as in a common centre.

3. Scripture assures us, that the church of Christ is indestructible and infallible. It is built upon a rock; it is the place of Jehovah's rest, in which he delights; it is that which he enlightens by his Spirit, protects by his power, and blesses with his love. Uninjured by error no less than by persecution, it

¹ "Septimus Confess. Augsburg. Articulus, quo affirmatum Ecclesiam congregationem esse sanctorum, non potest citra fidei præjudicium admitti, si per hoc segregentur ab ecclesia mali et peccatores. Nam articulus ille in Constantiensi damnatus est concilio inter errores damnatæ memoriæ J. Huss et plane contradicit evangelio." Confut. Augsburg Confess. 7.

² See APPENDIX, Note N.

³ Otium Hannoveranum, p. 172.

will continue until Christ come to take it to himself as his chosen and beloved bride, with exceeding joy. Now, of what is it that these delightful assurances are held out to us in scripture? If we understand them of the spiritual church of Christ, they convey to us the pleasing confidence that at no time will Christ permit that church to lapse or become extinct; that as long as the world lasts, he shall have a people upon earth, "to the praise of the glory of his grace;" and that they, whether united in visible fellowship or not, shall always be witnesses for his truth to mankind. This is a pleasing and an encouraging thought, and one directly calculated to minister purely and abundantly to the cause of genuine religion in the world. But how different does the whole tenor and tendency of these revelations become, when we understand them of a visible confederacy! The perpetuity and infallibility of the church of Christ then become the attributes of a certain community of professing Christians, and the apple of discord is cast amid the multitudinous sects of Christians, each endeavouring to substantiate its sole and undivided claim to the inestimable treasure. In such a controversy, the victory of Romanism is certain. Grant that these promises apply to some one visible church, and it follows that as there is no community of Christians which has existed in the preservation of unbroken visible continuity from apostolic to more recent times except the church of Rome, the claim

of that church to be regarded as the body to which alone these assurances were given, will hardly admit of a doubt. This is in substance the famous argument of Bossuet in defence of his church;¹ and admitting his fundamental position, that the church must be always visible, I do not see how his conclusion can be avoided. We are thus forced upon the first step in a course of argument which ends in the establishment of the infallibility of the Romish church, in the limitation of Christianity within the pale of her communion, and in the adjudication of all societies which have separated from her to the ranks of those powers of hell that are seeking to prevail against Christ's church. These are serious consequences; but how they are to be avoided, unless we are prepared to deny the necessary visibility of Christ's church as one catholic body, I do not see. Let this denial, however, be made and maintained, and the entire superstructure of Bossuet's argument falls to the ground. The promise of our Lord to his church will then be applicable not to any external society as such, but to the spiritual members of his mystical body, in whatever communion they may be found on earth. The claim of the church of Rome to the exclusive possession of the blessings promised, will thus be seen to rest upon grounds which formed no element whatever in the original charter of

¹ Hist. des Variations des Eglises Protestantes, liv. xv. ch. 3.—
See APPENDIX, Note O.

rights. The continued existence of true belief in Christ, and true love to him in the hearts of individuals, however few in number, obscure in situation, or sectarian in communion, will thus be viewed as the fulfilment from age to age of the divine assurance that the church of Christ is indestructible and infallible. And thus Christians of different communions, instead of agitating the idle and irritating question, Which is the true church? will be led to the elevating and purifying consideration, that though differences of sentiment on minor points may separate them into different parties externally, their agreement on the essentials of Christianity unites them as members of that one and indivisible body which unseen by human eye, is ever present to the complacent gaze and the benignant care of Him "who walketh amid the seven golden candlesticks," and saith to his anxious and expectant servants, "Fear not: I am the First and the Last: I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore. Amen; and have the keys of hades and death."¹

These brief hints may serve to show, that the question to which this chapter has been devoted, is not one of mere empty speculation, but carries with it conclusions of much practical importance to the

¹ Rev. ii. 1; i. 17, 18.

interests of truth, and the cause of a spiritual, a sanctifying, and a uniting Christianity. The more the subject is considered, the more I believe will evangelical Christians be brought to the conclusion, that the confounding of the spiritual church of Christ with a visible body has been, as M. Claude expresses it, "the source of all the errors of the Romanists, and the foundation of all the sophisms which they have uttered on this head."¹ To the silent and perhaps unacknowledged influence of the same cause, I suspect we must trace much of that formality and uncharitableness by which the Protestant churches have been infected, disfigured, and paralysed. Happy will it be for Christians of all denominations, when aiming on the one hand to preserve the purity and religious activity of the society of which they are members, they shall on the other stand ready to unite in fellowship and co-operation with true Christians of all denominations, and as much and as readily with those of another denomination, as with those of their own !

¹ *Défence de la Réformation*, iii. partie.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CLAIMS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

“De tua nunc sententia quaero, unde hoc jus Ecclesiae usurpes? si quia dixerit Petro Dominus, ‘super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam, tibi dedi claves regni caelestis;’ vel, ‘quaecunque alligaveris, vel solveris in terra, erunt alligata vel soluta in caelis;’ idcirco praesumis et ad te derivasse solvendi et alligandi potestatem, id est ad omnem ecclesiam Petri propinquam? Qualis es evertens atque commutans manifestam Domini intentionem personaliter hoc Petro conferentem?”

“Concerning your opinion I come now to enquire, whence you usurp this right to the church? Is it because the Lord said to Peter, ‘On this rock will I build my church; to thee have I given the keys of the heavenly kingdom;’ or, ‘Whatever thou shalt bind or loose on earth, shall be bound or loosed in heaven’—is it because of this that you presume to have derived to yourself, that is to the whole of Peter’s church, the power of binding and loosing? What are you, that you thus overturn and alter the manifest intention of the Lord to confer this on Peter personally?—TERTULLIAN. in *Lib. de Pudicitia*, sec. 21.

WHILST it is important, on the one hand, to maintain that the church of Christ, as such, is not a visible, but a spiritual community; it is no less important, on the other hand, to contend stedfastly against the opposite error of those who would represent Christianity as a religion, the whole influence of which terminates in the private and unannounced

convictions of the individual by whom it has been embraced. This opinion is as much opposed to the view which the New Testament gives of the native effects, and *social* tendency of our religion, as the former is to the purity, the spirituality, and the internal unity of the church. In the writings of the Apostles we find no countenance whatever given to that species of furtive piety to which I have referred. All their teaching, on this head, tends to the conclusion, that where the truth is received into the heart, it will be openly professed in the life, and will naturally draw together into association and fellowship all those in whom it really abides. We find also from their writings that provision has been made by the great Head of the church in the institutions of his grace, for the orderly and efficient development of this tendency of his religion, by the appointment of ordinances, which can only be observed where Christians are joined together in one regularly constituted society. Whilst, therefore, we have to maintain that *the* church universal is invisible, we have no less decidedly to assert that there should be, in every place where there are Christians, *a* church visible, of which they should form members—that all such churches should be based upon the simple ground of Christian discipleship, admitting into their fellowship none but those who give credible evidence of being born again, excluding none who are really of Christ's flock, and walk as He has enjoined,—and

that the members of each church, thus united, should abide together in love, should have fellowship as brethren, should maintain among them the regular observance of the sacred ordinances, and should make it their anxious concern to do all that in them lies to promote each other's welfare, and the prosperity of the church generally. To join such a church, and to act consistently as a member of it, appears, from the New Testament, to be as directly the duty of every Christian, as it is the duty of all men who hear the gospel to receive it and become Christians. If any, then, shall neglect this duty, on the plea that he is a member of the church universal and spiritual, he must be condemned as contravening a clear and express precept of Christ, and reminded that he has need to take care, lest he be found among the number of those who say, "Lord, Lord, yet do not the things which he hath commanded."

In appointing this rule for his people, our Lord designed the promotion of their spiritual advantage; and to this end all the parts of the institution are adapted. Of these, in addition to the mutual fellowship of the brethren, the most important are the stated declaration of the word of truth in the church, the administration of the law of Christ in relation to the mutual intercourse of the brethren, and the dispensation of those symbolical rites which Christ has appointed to be observed by his people. Now, to take

care that these things be duly done, is the duty and the interest of all the members of the church; but it has not been left to them to determine *how* this may be best attained. He who instituted these societies has appointed the proper means by which the duties, essential to their well-being, are to be discharged. In addition to the extraordinary officers who were required at the outset of the church, he hath given for the permanent advantage of his people, "pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Of these functionaries, the duties, the status, the authority are all matter of divine prescription in the statute book of the Christian kingdom. They are the only functionaries in the world who can justly claim to hold authority by divine right. Of all other rulers, it must be admitted, that the authority they wield, when it is not an assumption of power to which they have no right, is only what has been conceded to them by express stipulation on the part of their subjects. In a Christian church the power of the people, in relation to the pastoral office, terminates in the act of choosing the individual who is to fill the office, and cannot be legitimately used to define his duties, or prescribe the limits of his authority. Both *his* duties and *their's* are defined by a higher power, and just as he may not "lord it over God's heritage," by imposing upon

¹ Eph. iv. 11.

them his own laws, so may not they overturn his rule by imposing upon him any conditions other than those which the Master has already specified. In either case where this order is contravened, *sin* is committed which cannot but prove injurious to the church.

The duties prescribed in the New Testament for the Christian pastor are few ; and, however difficult it may be to discharge them aright, it is not difficult to describe their general character and nature. As a *Pastor*, he is to feed the church with the food which God has provided for them in his word, expounding to them the truths of the sacred volume, and leading them on in the knowledge of the ways of God. As a *Bishop* in the church, he is to “ watch for souls as one who must give account,” carefully exhorting, admonishing, comforting, and rebuking the members as occasion may demand. As a *Ruler* he is to see to it, that the church walk in all things according to the law of Christ, preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and maintaining a wholesome activity in the discharge of all the functions of a Christian society. And as the appointed *President* of the church, it is for him to administer the ordinances of Christ’s house, arrange the business that is to come before the brethren, moderate in their deliberations, collect their suffrages, and see that the resolutions adopted by them, to give effect to the laws of Christ among them, are carried into execu-

tion. For the efficient discharge of these duties it is obvious that no other qualifications are requisite, than such as are the result of natural talent, acquired information and skill, and a mind rightly imbued with Christian truth, and influenced by piety, sincerity, and zeal. As the office is purely ministerial, not legislative, there needs no other authority to support it, on the part of the individual sustaining it, than that which truth, prudence, and consistent conduct furnish. As its duties consist solely in the application to individual cases of the general rules of Christian economy, laid down in the New Testament, it requires no other sanctions than those which the simple fact, that these rules are of divine appointment, carries with it. And as its design is merely to secure order, regularity, and efficiency in the use of those means by which the prosperity of Christian churches and persons is advanced, by concentrating upon one individual, what is really imperative upon all, but what, if left to all, might be apt to be attended to by none, it is plain that the possession of it argues no other superiority in the church, on the part of the individual who has it, than just what is inseparable from the place to which he has been raised, and from the natural ability and moral excellence with which he may discharge its functions.

Such is the view which, borrowing our opinion from the New Testament, we have been led to take

of the nature and duties of the pastoral office in a Christian church. Very different from this, however, is the view entertained by catholics on this head. With them the minister is a consecrated priest ; invested with authority over the consciences, and power over the destinies of men ; having a direct commission from Christ to open and shut the doors of the kingdom of heaven, to grant or withhold absolution of sins ; able to give a saving efficacy to the rites he administers, so that what in another man's hands would be a mere unmeaning ceremony, or a blasphemous parody, becomes in his not only a solemn act of worship, but a direct forth-putting of saving power upon the worshipper ; in short, in every proper sense, a mediator between God and the flock over which he presides, and that solely in virtue of his official character, whatever his personal character may be. That such are the views actually held by catholics on this head, the following extracts from the Tracts for the Times will abundantly show.

Speaking of the primitive Fathers, one of the writers urges upon his brethren, what he says is their doctrine, thus :—

“ Their principle was this : that the Holy Feast on our Saviour's sacrifice, which all confess to be generally necessary to salvation, was intended by him to be constantly conveyed through the hands of commissioned persons. Except, therefore, we can show such a warrant, we cannot be sure that our hands convey the sacrifice ; we cannot be sure that souls worthily prepared, receiving the bread which

¹ Tract No. iv. p. 2. See also the passage from the same tract, already quoted in a preceding chapter, p. 21.

we break, and the cup of blessing which we bless, are partakers of the body and blood of Christ.”¹ “Hear,” exclaims the writer of Tract No. 52, “the very doctrine of the church apostolical. Jesus Christ, the chief Shepherd and Bishop, commits the pastoral office to whom He pleases; in the first place to his Apostles, and after them to all whom they, by the help of his ordinary grace, shall appoint,” p. 4. Again, “the teaching of the primitive church brought this home to every man’s own soul, not only on the general ground of submission to our Lord’s ordinances, but because the bread and wine in the Eucharist was not accounted the true sacrament of Christ, without Christ’s warrant given to the person administering: which warrant the Fathers well knew could only be had through His Apostles and their successors,” p. 7. Once more: “In the judgment of the church, the Eucharist administered without apostolical commission; may to pious minds be a very edifying ceremony, but it is not that blessed thing which our Saviour graciously meant it to be: it is not, verily and indeed, taking and receiving the body and blood of Him, our incarnate Lord,” p. 7.

I shall give only one extract more, by way of showing what is designed and avowed to be the purpose of maintaining thus primarily the doctrine of the apostolical succession:—

“It is obvious,” says the author of Tract No. 4, “that among other results of the doctrine of the Apostolic succession, thoroughly considered and followed up, it would make the relation of pastor and parishioner far more engaging, as well as more awful, than it is usually considered at present. Look on your pastor as acting by man’s commission, and you may respect the authority by which he acts, you may venerate and love his personal character, but it can hardly be called a *religious* veneration; there is nothing properly *sacred* about him. But once learn to regard him as ‘the Deputy of Christ for reducing man to the obedience of God,’ and every thing about him becomes changed, every thing stands in a new light. In public and in private, in church and at home, in consolation and in censure, and, above all, in the administration of the Holy Sacraments, a faithful man naturally considers ‘by this, His messenger, Christ is speaking to me; by his very being and place in the world he is a perpetual witness to the truths of the sacred history, a perpetual earnest of communion with our Lord, to those who come duly prepared to His table.’ In short it must make just all the dif-

ference in every part of a clergyman's duty, whether he do it, and be known to do it, in that faith of his commission from Christ or no." p. 7.

To some, perhaps, it may seem strange that such views should be held by persons belonging to a professedly reformed church. A little reflection, however, will suffice to show that high and overweening as these notions are of the sanctity (one might almost, from the language of the last extract, say the *inherent divinity*) of the clerical office, they are only the natural counterpart of the doctrine held by Catholics, concerning the necessary visibility of the church of Christ, as a body always existing on earth, to an examination of which the preceding chapter is devoted. If we embrace this latter opinion, it is obvious that we must admit the necessity of a succession of men by whom that body is to be visibly regulated and controlled, so that its unity and purity may be preserved. We must admit farther, that these men must derive their standing from some source higher than the church itself, otherwise this visible body being liable to pollution and corruption, might, were the choice of its pastors left to itself, in progress of time, choose only such as held views congenial with those into which the electors had fallen, and thus the purity, the apostolicity, and the unity of the church be destroyed. It is further obvious, that men who are to fulfil these high functions must not only be duly invested with their office, but must be endowed with proper authority, and proper power fully to

discharge its duties, else the office itself may come to be despised, and the control of the office-bearers to be rejected. All this necessitates the institution of a separate class in the church,—a spiritual hierarchy to whom the care of souls, the government of the church, and the preservation of its unity and apostolicity may be committed. These men are not, properly speaking, *in* the church, but *over* the church. To the members of the church they owe nothing for the possession of their office; to the members of the church they are not responsible for the manner in which they discharge its functions. They are an order by themselves, standing aloof from the common mass; somewhere between Christ and the church; having a right of access to him, which no private Christian has or can have, and bearing within them a mystic power derived by direct transmission from him. That men who believe themselves to be thus dignified and privileged should demand reverence and religious veneration, is but the natural result of their so believing. Nay, I consider them *bound* to make this demand, if they really hold these views. If they are, indeed, the guardians of the church—the rulers of God's heritage—the priests of our New Testament Temple—the deputies of Christ, upon whom he has laid his authority, and to whom he has committed the charge of his body; I can conceive of no act, on their part, more unworthy and cruel, than were they to permit people

to fall under the impression that they are mere ordinary men. I have no quarrel with them, therefore, for the lofty assumptions and high claims they make. It is only consistent with their principles that they should advance such. All that I claim is liberty to examine into the soundness of their principles before I consent to bow before the loftiness of their pretensions.

The argumentation by which Catholics endeavour to build up their doctrine concerning the claims and functions of the clergy, resolves itself, when analysed, into the following propositions:—1. That the sacraments by means of which Christianity is mainly to be advanced, can be duly administered only by men who sustain the office of priests. 2. That men become priests by receiving ordination to that office by duly qualified men. 3. That only those are qualified thus to ordain, who hold the Episcopal office, and have received authority from those who held that office before them. 4. That the source of this authority is Christ himself, who gave it to his Apostles, by whom it has been transmitted through an unbroken line to the Bishops of the Catholic church in the present day. On these four points the substance of their doctrine, concerning the priesthood, hangs; and each of these assertions it is incumbent on them to make good, else the chain of their argument is broken, and the mighty assumptions suspended on it fall to the ground.

To make these assertions good, it is not enough to give us mere vague and general probabilities. In such a case as this these will not do. There must be *proof*—proof full, sound, and suitable. This, both the nature of the case, and the language of catholics themselves, entitle us to demand. If salvation is to be procured solely through the medium of sacerdotal influence, if the clergy are to be the sole dispensers of the life-giving sacraments, and if they are to stand to us in the place of the apostles, by being “the perpetual witnesses to the truths of the sacred history,” then in all reason it must be admitted, that they are bound to substantiate these pretensions by evidence which shall leave no room whatever for reasonable doubt. Their proof of these claims must be as clear and incontestible, as was that which every Jewish priest was bound to offer before he could be permitted to assume the functions of the sacerdotal office.¹ We may even, without presumption, say that their claim should be made out as indubitably as that of Christ himself; and that for the reason which Paul assigns for his labouring so much to prove this latter point,² viz., that we may have the necessary confidence in committing into his hands those awful interests with which a priest, by the nature of his office, is entrusted. *Uncertainty* in such

¹ See Ezra ii. 62; Nehem. vii. 64. Horne's Introduction, vol. iii., p. 276, 8th Edit.

² Heb. v. 14; vii. 23-28; x. 19.

a case is destruction of all security—incompatible with peace of mind—little better than despair itself. Let us, then, have no paltering in this mighty question, no enlarging upon possibilities and preliminary probabilities, no hastening to a conclusion by the bridge of strained analogies and doubtful facts. For each position laid down there must be scripture proof; for each fact assumed there must be competent historical evidence. Of this the Oxford divines profess to be fully aware, for in one of the passages already quoted, they admit that unless they can show a sufficient warrant for their pretensions, neither can they themselves have confidence in their own power, nor can their people repose, with any comfortable assurance, that trust in them which they require. Having thus fairly appealed the question to the bar of reasoning, let us hope they will be found cordially willing to abide by its decisions.

The order in which the successive links of a chain of reasoning are arranged, is not always that which it is most suitable to follow, in examining into the conclusiveness of the reasoning itself. I shall, therefore, for the sake of distinctness, and to prevent repetition, reverse the order in which the positions above announced stand, and, beginning with the last, proceed retrogressively to the consideration of the others.

SECTION I.

APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION.

It is affirmed by the catholics as the grand basis of their doctrine concerning the clerical office, that Christ committed to his apostles the power of appointing bishops to be their successors in the church—that the apostles exercised this power by delegating to certain bishops the official authority that they had themselves received from Christ—that these again in turn delegated their power to others—and that this succession, with its accompanying power, has continued unbroken to the present day. Here three important facts are assumed as true: let us examine the evidence on which they rest.

I. It is affirmed that Christ gave his apostles power to appoint successors to themselves in the church.—Here, be it observed, in the outset, that the question is not whether the apostles appointed suitable persons to teach and rule the churches which they had planted, and which for a time they might have taught and ruled themselves. Nor are we at present concerned to enquire whether such officers as bishops, (using that word in the modern sense of it, to denote

an overseer of the congregations and pastors of a particular district) had any existence in the apostolic churches. On these two questions no opinion requires at present to be offered. Abstracting from them therefore, I would confine myself to the one point,—Whether or no there be any evidence that the apostles were commissioned by Christ to appoint persons to be their successors, in the sense of *possessing the whole, or any considerable part of that power which was peculiar to them as apostles.*

In support of the affirmative in this question, I find great stress laid upon our Lord's words to his apostles, as recorded in John xx. 21: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." On finding this passage quoted in support of the assertion now under examination, one's first impulse is to ask, What has it to do with the subject? So much, it seems, that if one writer on the question is to be believed, these words are of themselves sufficient for the decision of the whole question. The writer I have referred to, tries to make out his point thus:—"If Christ sent his apostles *as* his Father sent him, sent them, that is to say, to do his work after he had departed from the world; if by that very act he showed that, in his ministerial character, he had the power of delegating and continuing his authority, could they to whom he promised the same power as he possessed conceive that that essential part of it,

the right of delegation, was withheld, when the religion was to be continued for ever?"¹

I am not sure that I understand fully the meaning of the writer in this somewhat confused sentence, but I take him to say that as our Lord, being the messenger of the Father, had power to appoint his apostles, so they, being his apostles, had power to appoint their successors, and that the evidence of this lies in the declaration that Christ sent them *as* the Father had sent him. If this be Mr Rose's reasoning, it is obvious that it rests entirely upon the assumption that our Lord, in the passage quoted, institutes a comparison between the condition and prerogatives of the apostles as sent by Him, and his own condition and prerogatives as sent by the Father. But is this our Lord's meaning in these words? Is not the comparison which he institutes, a comparison between the authority which he, as the head of his church, was exercising in sending forth his ambassadors, and the authority which his Father had exercised in sending forth him? If this be the meaning of the passage, Mr Rose's argument, based on it, is not worth a single rush; for it is clear as day that the mere fact that Christ, in sending forth his apostles, acted with the same authority as his Father had displayed in sending forth him, can afford no

¹ Rose's Commission and Consequent Duties of the Clergy, Sermon ii. p. 27.

evidence that *they* were thereby invested with the same power with which their Master was invested. A sovereign may appoint a viceroy, and the latter may have power, with equal authority, to send forth ambassadors, but it certainly does not follow from this that the latter are *also* invested with power to appoint their successors.

To make his argument of any worth, then, Mr Rose should have proved that the force of our Lord's words is as follows :—"You being my apostles are sent with the same power and authority as I have from being the Father's Apostle." This, however, he has not attempted, but has contented himself, apparently, with assuming what it was obviously incumbent on him to have proved.

To my mind the words of our Lord convey, plainly and directly, the impression that his intention in uttering them, was to impress upon the minds of the disciples the idea that they were to act as the ambassadors and apostles of one who had *divine* authority to send them forth — authority of the same kind as that by which he himself had been sent forth by the Father. "As the Father hath sent me, I also send you." The comparison here is plainly, I think, not between the parties *sent*, but between the parties *sending*; and the design of our Lord's words is not to convince the apostles that they had the same power as he had, but that he had the same power as

the Father had. Our Lord is speaking, not in his ministerial character, but, as the risen Lord of his church, in his royal character.

What confirms this view of this passage, is the language which immediately succeeds in verses 22 and 23 : “ And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted, and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained.” In uttering these words our Lord spoke as one invested with divine authority. With God alone is the power of the Spirit, and to Him alone does it belong to forgive sins, or to commission any of his creatures to forgive sins. On this occasion, then, our Lord spoke as a divine person, having all power to do as he saw meet in his church. This renders it impossible that his design could have been to communicate to the minds of the apostles, the idea that they were thenceforward to be endowed with the same power as was possessed by him. The very act of assuming *divine* power, in giving them their commission, showed that this could not be his meaning. As they were not capable of being made divine, so neither could they be made to receive authority or sustain functions which belonged to their Master only because he was divine.

This passage, then, simply asserts our Saviour's equality of power and authority with the Father, and proves nothing as to the alleged transference,

from him to his apostles, of the same prerogatives which belonged to him.

The next passage to be considered under the present head, is our Lord's commission to the apostles, when he said to them, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."¹ The stress of the argument here is laid on the promise of our Lord, that he would be with the apostles unto the end of the world. "We rest not our cause," says Mr Rose, "on a word, [he refers to the word *all*, on which he had been remarking] but on the promise of Jesus which explains it."² As this cannot imply that the parties then addressed were to have an earthly immortality, it is argued that it must mean that they were to have successors who were to continue to the end of time. And as it is necessary for the argument of the catholics, that these successors of the apostles should be bishops, it is inferred that in this passage our Lord intimates to the apostles that after they had finished their course on earth, they were to delegate their power to diocesan bishops. Now, here I observe—1. That even granting that this passage intimates that the apostles were to have successors, it does not convey the slightest hint that these were to be diocesan bishops. If that is argued for, it must be from some

¹ Mark xvi. 15; Matt. xxviii. 20.

² Serm. ii, p. 28.

other source than from the *words* of this passage. It may be said that no man is worthy to be called a successor of the apostles but a bishop; or, that by being consecrated a bishop, a man, *ipso facto*, becomes a successor of the apostles; or that the apostles actually did constitute bishops their successors; or that, calmly considering the subject, it appears that bishops are invariably such perfect patterns of all that the apostles were, that one cannot doubt their spiritual genealogy:—all this may, lawfully enough, by way of inference, be argued; only, it is to be remembered that there is not a word about bishops in Christ's commission to the apostles, and, therefore, that it is not from this verse that their claim to be the successors of the apostles can be argued. 2. Supposing our Lord's words to intimate the appointment of successors to the apostles to the end of time, it is nevertheless plain that these successors could not be required to do or to be more, than is required of the apostles themselves in the words of the commission. But nothing is there prescribed to them, except the duties of *teaching* and *baptising*. Hence, every one who may lawfully teach and baptise is, in this sense, a successor of the apostles. It follows from this, on the one hand, that persons not bishops may regard themselves as the successors of the apostles, and on the other, that as teaching and baptising are not duties of the bishops, *as such*, these functionaries, in their official character as bishops,

are excluded, so far as this passage goes, from the office of successors to the apostles. 3. These conclusions are argued on the assumption that the words of our Lord, now before us, actually imply the necessity of successors to the apostles. This necessity, however, I am not prepared to admit. There are two ways of regarding our Lord's words, without involving the need of any such assumption: either, we may understand them as addressed to the apostles as the representatives of the church at large, or they may be viewed as relating exclusively to the apostles themselves. If we adopt the former view, our Lord's words mean nothing more than that it is his will, that by his people his gospel shall be continually proclaimed, for the salvation and baptism of men, so long as the world lasts, without specifying the parties by whom, *officially*, this is to be done. If we adopt the latter view, the passage will mean that the apostles, as his accredited ambassadors to the world, were authoritatively to announce from him the doctrine of salvation and purification, as well as enact all the commandments binding upon his church, and that to them, living in their writings, and continuing to exercise through these their apostolic authority, He would be present to the end of time to give effect to their doctrine, and by means of it to convert the world. So far as I can see, no violence is done to the passage by either of these interpretations; but the latter appears to me the

more natural of the two, as well as the one most in keeping with the true position of the apostles in the church, as the foundations of the New Jerusalem, and the judges of the spiritual Israel?¹ It is also favoured by the language which our Lord uses in the commission itself, when he specifies "the things which he had commanded them" (the apostles) as what they were to teach,—language which seems to intimate that as they alone had received the commandment, to them alone was the commission to impose it upon others given. But whichever of these views we adopt, (and either of them is preferable to one which thrusts into the passage an idea of which there are no traces in the words themselves) the language of our Lord cannot be regarded as giving the slightest sanction to the doctrine which catholics seek to erect upon it.²

"We must pass over," says Mr Rose, "many casual expressions of our Lord's, as, for example, those in which he compares Christian ministers to rulers set over the household by the Lord, and to shepherds appointed to feed the flock ;"³ and he refers to Matt. xxiv. 25 ; Luke xii. 42, 43 ; and John xxi. 15-17, as containing the expressions to which he alludes. The utter want of any reference, in these passages, to the question at issue, renders the

¹ Rev. xxi. 14 ; Matt. xix. 28.

² See APPENDIX, Note P.

³ Serm. ii. p. 30.

prudence of Mr Rose, in passing them over, worthy of all commendation.

II. Such is the whole amount of the evidence, usually adduced by catholics, in favour of the *first* fact assumed by them, in their attempt to prove from scripture their doctrine of the apostolical succession of diocesan bishops. Failing, however, in their attempt to substantiate, by direct evidence, the assertion that our Lord gave his apostles authority to appoint their official successors, they do not relinquish their cause as lost; for even supposing no recorded commission from Christ can be produced, authorising his apostles to act thus, still, it is argued, they must have had such a commission, from the fact that they actually did delegate their official power to the persons whom they placed as bishops over the primitive churches. This is the *second* fact asserted by catholics in their reasonings in support of the doctrine now under notice; and they endeavour to support it by adducing the cases of certain individuals mentioned in the New Testament, of whom it is alleged by them, that they were bishops, and that they were, as such, endowed with apostolic power.

The first of those cases to which our attention is directed is that of Epaphroditus, of whom Paul says: —“ Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger (ὑμῶν δὲ ἀπόστολον, your apostle), and he that ministered to

my wants.”¹ The application of the term “apostle” here to Epaphroditus, is the ground on which the argument from his case is rested by catholics. “Here,” it is said, “is a plain and indubitable instance of a bishop being called an apostle.” As to the application of the term apostle to Epaphroditus there can be no question ; but in passing from this to the inference, that because he was the bishop of the Philippians, he is here called their apostle, and that in the same sense in which Paul himself was an apostle, the most important and necessary steps of the argument are assumed without any evidence. Where is the proof that the word ἀπόστολος is used here in its technical sense of “apostle,” and not in its ordinary sense (as in the common version) of “messenger?” What evidence is there that Epaphroditus was Christ’s messenger to the Philippians, and not, as the context would lead us naturally to infer, the messenger of the Philippians to Paul? I say the context would naturally lead us to infer that this latter interpretation of the apostle’s language is the correct one ; for what are the circumstances in connection with which the name of Epaphroditus is introduced? The Philippian Christians, it appears, had sent to Paul a pecuniary gift, of which Epaphroditus had been the bearer (ch. iv. 18). In visiting Paul, the original intention of this individual, ap-

¹ Philip. ii. 25.

parently, was to have remained with the apostle, or at least to have laboured under his direction ; but unable to overcome his desire of visiting his brethren at Philippi, the apostle, who had appointed Timothy to that sphere of labour, felt constrained to accede to his wishes, and accordingly, in the mean time, sent him to them as the bearer of this epistle. It is in this connection that he speaks of him as “their apostle or messenger ;” and the meaning which every unbiassed mind would draw from such an expression, in such a case, is that the apostle used it as an appropriate designation of Epaphroditus, because he had acted as the medium of communication between the Philippians and himself. If it be said that the term “apostle” is never used in the New Testament in any but its technical sense, as designating a messenger of Christ to the church, I reply that to affirm so is to assume the question at issue, and is besides not accordant with fact, for in more than one instance the word occurs in its ordinary meaning in the New Testament. Thus our Lord says, (John xiii. 16) “The servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent (ἀπόστολος) greater than he that sent him.” So also, in 2 Cor. viii. 22, certain brethren are called by Paul “the messengers (ἀπόστολοι) of the churches,” which Chrysostom, in his note on the passage, explains, as signifying that “they were sent by the churches (πεμφθέντες ὑπὸ ἐκκλησιῶν).” The term apostle is also used to design-

nate those who acted as preachers of the gospel, even though not invested with any official authority. Thus Paul, in his epistle to the Romans (xvi. 7), speaks of two relatives of his own, Andronicus and Junia, the latter apparently a female, as "of note among the apostles," an expression which, as Calvin justly remarks,¹ proves that the term apostles is here used in its wider sense, "else it would be absurd to ascribe to such parties so great excellence among the few," of whom the twelve apostles formed a part. These instances show that the mere use of the appellation "apostle" cannot, in the case of Epaphroditus, be justly regarded as excluding the interpretation which the context would lead us to put upon Paul's words concerning him.

Farther, where is the evidence that Epaphroditus was bishop of the church at Philippi, or even that he was invested with the pastoral office at all, in any of those grades of it which catholics believe to have prevailed in the early church? The only ground on which this is affirmed is the description here given of him by Paul, as "his brother and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier;" but the freedom with which

¹ Comment. in loc. The note of Estius the distinguished catholic commentator on Paul's epistles, on this passage, is also worthy of being quoted:—"In apostolis, i. e., inter apostolos, non autem, ut quidam exponunt, judicio apostolorum. Large sumit apostoli nomen: ut comprehendit omnes eos qui evangelium Christi infidelibus annuntiant." And in his note on ch. i. 1, after referring to this, and other instances of the use of the term "apostle," he adds, "licet perfecta nominis apostolici ratio in eos haud omnino quadrat."

the apostle applies these and similar epithets, in cases where no official authority can be supposed to have existed, shows the exceeding flimsiness of this ground. Where, indeed, the bond of an universal brotherhood was recognised as uniting all the believers whatever their station in the world or in the church, and where all who knew the grace of Christ, esteemed it their privilege and duty to co-operate for the extension of his cause, nothing can be more unfair than to attempt, out of the use of such epithets as these, to force the conclusion that the party to whom they are applied, must have been an officer of high authority and rank in the church. If a specimen be wanted of the absurdity to which such a mode of reasoning leads, we have only to apply the same rule to the words of the apostle in ch. iv. 3 of this epistle, and argue that "those women who laboured in the gospel" with Paul, must, from being so described, have been bishops ruling over presbyters.

So much for the case of Epaphroditus ; let us turn now to those of Timothy and Titus, to which our attention is next called by the advocates of apostolical succession. As these two cases are, in their bearing on the present question, identical, it is unnecessary to examine them separately. The argument drawn from them in favour of the position now under examination, has been stated as follows by Mr Rose :—
"These apostles or bishops of the church were to ordain or lay hands on other inferior ministers, to

rule churches, not only to rebuke the Laity and reject the obstinate heretics from the church, but to receive accusations against even the Priesthood, to preach the gospel, to reprove, to rebuke, and to exhort; to do, in a word, the work of an evangelist, and make full proof of the ministry.”¹ Now, waiving any minute criticism of the mere phraseology of this sentence, there is enough in it of misapprehension and misstatement, to show how very far the writer of it must have been from possessing any clear or satisfactory conception of how the cases of these two eminent individuals might be twisted, so as to serve the cause of apostolic succession. If we compare the commencement of the sentence with its close, we find that, in Mr Rose’s opinion, “apostle,” “bishop,” and “evangelist” are only different appellations of one and the same office. Now we have but to look at Eph. iv. 11 to see that, in the early church, the office of apostle was held to be different from that of evangelist; for in that passage the writer, in order to illustrate his position, that God had, through Christ, given a diversity of gifts to his church, for the purpose of securing thereby its full and perfect unity,² says, “he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some

¹ Serm. ii. p. 32.

² “The apostle is speaking here, as the context shows, of the *diversity* of the gifts of grace, which all, nevertheless, proceed from *one* Lord, and all have for their end the *unity* of the faith and knowledge.” —Harless’ Commentar ueb. den brief Pauli an die Epheser. Erlangen, 1834; s. 349.

evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, &c." The office of bishop, also, was different from that of evangelist. A bishop is one whose functions are connected with a particular locality, whilst an evangelist was one whose business it was to go from place to place preaching the gospel, forming new churches, setting things in order amongst them, and then passing on to another sphere of labour.¹ It is impossible, then, that Timothy and Titus could, at one and the same time, be apostles, evangelists, and bishops, without accumulating upon themselves a plurality of offices, such as we have reason to believe never was so much as dreamt of in the early church, nay, without holding offices, the duties of which are incompatible the one with the other.

Again, in the sentence above quoted, Mr Rose says, that these so-called bishops were appointed to "ordain inferior ministers." Now, according to the episcopalian scheme of church polity, the ministers inferior to bishops are presbyters and deacons; and doubtless the author, when he wrote these words, had in his eye Paul's command to Titus, to "ordain elders in every city," (i. 5.) It is a pity, however, that he did not cast his eye forward a couple of verses, for then he would have discovered that these elders were themselves bishops. The words of Paul

¹ Cf. Eusebii Hist. Eccles. Lib. iii. c. 28; v. 10; and Neander's History of the Apostolic Age, vol. i. p. 173. Eng. Trans.

are these:—"Ordain elders in every city, as I appointed thee. If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly. For a *bishop* must be blameless," &c. (Ver. 5—7.) That, in these verses, the same class of ministers is referred to under the title of presbyters and bishops, will hardly admit of a question. Whether this proves that, in the apostolic churches, bishops were in no case more than mere presbyters, it is not my business here to inquire; all I am concerned to ask at present is, What becomes now of Mr Rose's assertion, that Timothy and Titus were appointed to "ordain *inferior* ministers" in the churches which they visited? If the officers whom they ordained were hyper-presbyterial bishops, Timothy and Titus, to be their *superiors*, must have been something more than mere bishops themselves. But if they were more than mere bishops, on what ground is it argued, that powers with which they were invested are necessarily possessed in full by these latter functionaries? Though the greater may include the less, who ever heard of its being maintained that the less necessarily included the greater? The advocates of apostolical succession are here presented with a choice of difficulties. Either they must maintain that the ministers whom Titus was to ordain were not bishops, and so contradict the apostle; or they must esteem Titus, and his companion in dignity, Timothy, as more than bishops, and so disqua-

lify themselves from appealing to their case as demonstrative of the possession, by mere bishops, of apostolic authority and power.

Which side of this alternative a thorough-going advocate of apostolical succession is most likely to adopt, one need hardly inquire. To contradict an apostle is, with the votaries of tradition, a small matter: to relinquish the support which the alleged episcopal station of Timothy and Titus lends to the dogma of apostolical succession is to desert the ark, and yield up the bulwark of their cause. At all hazards, then, Timothy and Titus must be held to be bishops, and nothing but bishops!

By those whose minds are unprejudiced by system, and consequently at liberty to examine into the merits of the case freely and impartially, a very different conclusion will be reached on this subject. Whatever be their notions as to the expediency or non-expediency of episcopal church polity, (and on this subject, I repeat it, I have no intention at present of offering any opinion,) they will not fail to see that the position maintained by Timothy and Titus in the early church, was one with which that of a hyper-presbyterial bishop has nothing peculiarly and officially in common. We have the express authority of the apostle himself for affirming that the duties to which Timothy was called were those of an evangelist, (2 Ep. iv. 5,) and from the close resemblance of the two cases, we may justly in-

fer that the office of Titus was the same. Now, as already observed, the itinerant character of the duties which this office imposed rendered it incompatible with those of a bishop, whose sphere of official activity is necessarily circumscribed and fixed. If they held an office which required them to go from place to place, and whose sphere was the world, the necessity of the case forbids the supposition that they could, at the same time, have been invested with an office of a purely local character.

To this it is usually replied, that to suppose Timothy and Titus to have been itinerant labourers, does not accord with the entreaty addressed by the apostle to the former "to abide still at Ephesus, (1 Tim. i. 3,) and his declaration to the latter, that he had "left him in Crete to set in order the things that are wanting." (Tit. i. 5.) The inference which it is wished we should draw from these passages is, that Timothy and Titus were permanently located, the former at Ephesus, and the latter at Crete, as the bishops of these dioceses. But this inference accords neither with the subsequent history of these two individuals, nor with the language of the apostle to them in the words quoted. So far was Timothy from remaining permanently at Ephesus, that a few years after this epistle was written we find him at Rome with the apostle (Coloss. i. 1; Phil. i. 1); and, as respects Titus, we find the apostle, in the same epistle in which he tells him that he had left him at

Crete, intimating to him his intention of calling him to rejoin him at Nicopolis, (iii. 12); and in the second epistle to Timothy, an epistle written subsequently to that to Titus, Paul speaks of Titus as then in Dalmatia; (iv. 10.) From this it is evident that the apostle never could have intended, by the language above quoted, to intimate the settlement of Timothy and Titus as the permanent bishops of Ephesus and Crete.—Nor will the words of the apostle themselves, even when viewed apart from these historical facts, justify the inference that has been, by episcopalians, forced out of them. In the case of both Timothy and Titus, Paul simply intimates that they had been placed, the one at Ephesus, and the other at Crete, to accomplish each a specific object; which accomplished, the reader is left at liberty to infer that they were absolved from their obligation to remain at these places. When Timothy had counteracted the evil influence of the Judaising teachers, and Titus had ordained elders in every city in Crete, the design of their residence in these places would be fulfilled; and so far as the apostle's language goes, the natural inference is, that they were then at liberty to seek another sphere of labour. Besides, it must be allowed to be not a little strange, that, supposing Ephesus to have been the seat of Timothy's bishopric, the apostle should have deemed it necessary to beseech him to *abide* in it; or, if Titus had been bishop of Crete, that Paul should have felt called upon

to assign a reason for *leaving* him there. This language plainly implies, either that there was no official tie binding them to these places respectively, or that they were very unwilling to be confined to the spot to which their official duties called them. Supposing them to have been conscientious bishops, resident within their respective dioceses, it would not be strange had we found the apostle beseeching them to leave their post, or apologising to them for taking them from it, in obedience to some urgent demand for their services elsewhere. But that he should beseech one bishop to stay at home, and apologise, as it were, to another for not taking him from home, is what we cannot reconcile either with the well-known firmness of apostolic discipline, or the official respectability and moral integrity of the parties addressed. Who does not see that the very use of such language by the apostle implies that those to whom it was uttered were officially *not* tied to one locality, but had been, in the cases referred to, temporarily, and for peculiar ends, requested by the apostle to confine themselves, for a longer period than was usual with them, to the places mentioned?

Whilst, then, it is admitted, that the duties which Timothy and Titus were called to discharge were of a very high character, the reasoning which would deduce from this a plea for investing diocesan bishops with similar powers, as the legitimate successors of these primitive officers, is rendered inva-

lid by the fact, that the office to which these powers were attached, was one altogether different from that of a bishop. It appears to have been of the number of those extraordinary offices which were required in "the beginning of the gospel;" but which were not intended by the great Head of the church to exist permanently in it. Whatever, then be the claims of diocesan bishops to the place they occupy in the Romanist and Anglican churches, it must be on some other basis than on the case of Timothy and Titus that they must rest.

It thus appears, that of the three cases which catholics are in the habit of adducing in support of their assertion, that the apostles actually did delegate to bishops the powers with which they themselves were invested, not one is to the point. In none of them is there any evidence that the party referred to was a bishop; and regarding one of the parties, it is even doubtful whether (to use catholic phraseology) he was in holy orders at all. The attempt, therefore, to prove from these cases the divine appointment of a succession of officers, to whom have been delegated the powers of the apostles, must be pronounced a signal and unqualified failure.

How could it be otherwise? The very position is in itself absurd, and the attempt to maintain it preposterous. We have only to look at the nature of the apostolic office, and the qualifications required of all who sustained it, to be satisfied of this. An apostle

was one who had received express authority from Christ to go forth in his name, and enjoin upon men all that he had commanded them.¹ Before a man could be an apostle, he must have seen Christ, and personally received his commission from him.² As a witness of Christ's resurrection, it was necessary that he should have had personal knowledge of the fact that the same Jesus who was crucified and buried rose again and dwelt upon the earth.³ The endowments of the apostles were such as to place their claims beyond any doubt or question: they were baptised with the Holy Ghost;⁴ and their word was confirmed by God himself "bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will."⁵ To men who were invested with such an office, and in whom such qualifications were demanded, there *could* be no successors by an act of delegation. The maxim of the canon law, that "a personal privilege doth follow the person, and is extinguished with the person," applies here most fully. The privilege of the apostles was purely personal. It rested on the fact, that the men, Peter, James, Paul, and the rest of them, had, with their own eyes, seen the Lord, and with their own ears heard his words, and in their own persons received

¹ Luke vi. 13; Matt. xxviii. 19; comp. the frequently recurring phrase in Paul's epistles, "An apostle by the will of God," &c.

² 1 Cor. ix. 1.

³ Acts i. 21, 22.

⁴ John xx. 22.

⁵ Heb. ii. 4, comp. Mark xvi. 20; Acts xiv. 3; 2 Cor. xii. 12.

authority from him to tell to the world what they had heard and seen, as well as power to work miracles in attestation of the truth of their pretensions. That such a privilege could be transmitted by derivation from age to age, is simply impossible; and the possession of it by persons in whom not one of the qualifications essential to the enjoyment of it exists, is what—to use the strong but just language of Barrow—“no man, without gross imposture and hypocrisy, could challenge to himself.”¹

III. I come now to the examination of the *third* fact asserted by the advocates of apostolical succession, viz., that from the days of the apostles downwards, there has been an unbroken descent of bishops, through which each clergyman, who has received episcopal ordination, can trace his spiritual lineage up to the apostles themselves. On this head let us first hear one of the Oxford Tractarians:—“As to the *fact* of the apostolical succession, *i. e.*, that our present bishops are the heirs and representatives of the apostles by successive transmission of the prerogative of being so, this is too notorious to require proof. Every link in the chain is known from St Peter to our present metropolitans.”² Whether this boastful language be designed to repress or to encourage inquiry, I know not; but pre-

¹ Treatise on the Pope's Supremacy. Works, vol. vii. p. 203. (Hughes's edit.)

² Tract, No. 7, p. 2.

suming it to be the latter, let us look at the evidence on which this "notorious fact" rests.

Before doing so, however, it may be worth while to remark, that even supposing "every link in the chain," from Peter to the present heads of the church of England, substantiated on good and unimpeachable evidence, it would still be very far from having been proved, that the "present bishops are the heirs and representatives of the apostles." This depends upon its being shown, that the line of succession is one along which the powers and prerogatives of the apostles were destined to run. As the honours to which the representative of a noble house is entitled in virtue of his descent, depend entirely on the terms of the original patent of nobility granted to his ancestor, and not upon any dignities which that individual might, during his life, have chanced to sustain; so in the case before us, even admitting a regular descent from the apostles on the part of the bishops of the present day, this would entitle them to claim nothing more than they can show from the New Testament to have been conferred by the supreme source of spiritual power upon the apostles, for the purpose of being transmitted to their successors. This, as we have already seen, is what they are unable to do, and therefore their boasted lineage avails them nothing. The glory and power of their pretended ancestors is a mere historical fact, on which they can found no

claim. The apostolic dignity was personal, not hereditary; it is not specified in the patent on which these, the professed descendants of the apostles, found; it is, therefore, as much beyond their claim as the office of prime minister of the British empire is beyond the claim of any of those who can trace their descent from the Walpoles or the Chathams by whom that office has in former years been sustained.

Even supposing, then, the links of the chain of apostolic succession to be as notoriously complete as catholics affirm them to be, little would be gained thereby to their cause in default of any evidence, that those by whom that succession has been continued, have any claim in right to the honours which the parties, from whom they profess to have descended, enjoyed. But what if the links be not all sound and firm? What if there be certain breaks in the chain which it is impossible now to supply? What if some of the links that appear firm are in reality composed of spurious metal, and are incapable of transmitting the virtue which is supposed to pass through them? What, in short, if this "fact, too notorious to require proof," be in truth no fact at all; but merely one of those "fables and endless genealogies," which, so far from being matter of universal assent, only "minister questions," and produce divisions in the church? In this case, "the confident boasting" of the writer above quoted will

turn out to be only the "great swelling words of vanity" which his party are so fond of using, and by which they seek to allure to their standard those with whom boldness of assertion goes a greater length than soundness of argument.

When the advocates of catholicism are called upon to produce evidence in support of the alleged unbroken descent of their bishops from the apostles, they are wont to reply by placing before us a very orderly, imposing, and lengthy catalogue of names which they affirm to be the designations of the parties through whom the line of this descent has passed. All this is well enough so far as it goes; but when they would have this to decide the question as to the fact of apostolic succession, it becomes necessary to submit their catalogue to a somewhat closer scrutiny.

1. When this is done, it will appear, *first*, That of the names in the catalogue a great many are those of persons who possess no historical existence. They have "a local habitation" in the catalogue, but nowhere else. Over the circumstances of their births, baptisms, consecration as bishops, spheres of labour, deaths, burials, there hangs the cloud of a hopeless oblivion. *Magni stant nominis umbræ*,—their names are the whole of them. Where, then, is the evidence that such persons ever lived? Are we to believe this on the mere faith of a catalogue? This can hardly in reason be required. Every person

knows how easily a mere set of names may be fabricated. No gap is so easily supplied as a gap in a genealogical roll, where no evidence is demanded of the genuineness of the name by which it is filled up. Even the portraits which the Romanists profess to furnish of the successors of Peter in the papal chair, can be allowed no weight in such a question; for portraits, no less than names, can be forged.¹ What alone can substantiate the integrity of such a succession, is competent historical evidence of the actual existence of the parties said to compose its successive links; and until this is done, we are bound to hold all claims based upon it as unfounded and fictitious.

2. In the case of several of the parties specified, the evidence of their being entitled to the place assigned to them in this alleged chain of descent from the apostles is so uncertain as, in a question involving a claim of prerogative, to be unworthy of credit. This, for instance, is the case with those who occupy the most important place of all, viz., those who stand at the head of the list. The order in which these are commonly placed is the follow-

¹ In the palace of Holyrood there is a series of the portraits of the Scottish kings, reaching up to a period higher than the Christian era! And a picture dealer told the writer of this some time ago, that he had got an order from a rich *parvenu* to supply him with a *set of ancestors*, in the shape of portraits of mailed knights and stately dames, by which he might delude others, and please himself, with the flattering fiction, that he was the last link in a noble succession!

ing:—St Peter, Linus, Cletus, Clement, Anacletus, Euarestus, &c. Now, respecting the apostle Peter, it remains doubtful whether he ever was at Rome; it is all but certain he was not there for any great length of time; it is as certain as any thing of the kind can be, that he never was bishop of the church in that city.¹ Then, as to his alleged successors, the order in which they appeared is involved in hopeless uncertainty. It is, to use the words of Stillingfleet, “as muddy as the Tiber itself; for here Tertullian, and Rufinus, and several others, place Clement next to Peter; Irenaeus and Eusebius set Anacletus before him; Epiphanius and Optatus both Anacletus and Cletus; Augustine and Damasus, with others, Anacletus, Cletus, and Linus all to precede him. What way,” he justly asks, “shall we find to extricate ourselves out of this labyrinth?”² Well might Stillingfleet feel this perplexity, when even Eusebius himself, writing in the fourth century, complains that, being the first to venture upon an inquiry into the successions of the apostles, he felt like one who was “attempting a desert and untrodden path,” and that he was utterly unable to find even “the bare traces of those who had gone before him, save here and there some slight marks discernible like signals from afar.”³ It is true that afterwards he says, that he hopes “to be able to

¹ See Barrow's Treatise on the Pope's Supremacy.

² Irenicum, part ii. ch. 6, p. 322.

³ Hist. Eccles., lib. i. c. 1.

preserve the successions, if not of all, yet of the most eminent of the apostles ;” but with what success we may infer from his own acknowledgment in a later part of his work, where, speaking of the labours of Peter and Paul, he admits that he knows nothing of the persons who laboured with them, especially in Asia, except what may be learned from Paul’s epistles.¹ It must be allowed to be not a little surprising, that what was so dubious in the fourth century should, in the nineteenth, have become “ too notorious to require proof.”

3. Even supposing that the line of succession, by which it is affirmed that apostolic power has been transmitted to the bishops of the Anglican church in the present day, were to be historically substantiated, it would remain for the advocates of that opinion to show that each of the individuals composing that line, stands perfectly exempt from the influence of any of those circumstances which, in the estimation of catholics themselves, disqualify a man for sustaining the office of bishop, and vitiate all acts of an official nature which such an one might perform. It must be apparent to every one that this is absolutely necessary to make their claims of the slightest value ; for if, in the case of any one of the parties in this succession, there was such a defect as prevented the transmission through him of

¹ Lib. iii. c. 4.

the mysterious virtue supposed to be propagated along this chain of descent, it is obvious that, in his person, this virtue was arrested, and that to none of those who are supposed to have derived it from him can it have been conveyed. The task, then, which the Anglican clergy have to perform in this respect, is to exclude, by competent historical evidence, all doubt as to the sufficiency of the channel through which their orders have descended to them. This is a task of no trifling magnitude. Even were we to grant to them that the only line along which ecclesiastical orders have been transmitted in this country, is that which passes through Augustine, the missionary of Pope Gregory to the Anglo-Saxons, it would be still more than a wise man would willingly undertake to prove that, in the case of every individual of those composing that line, all the conditions required to render his official acts valid had been complied with. But this more limited task cannot be allowed. We know that the line referred to was not the only channel of episcopal influence in Britain. We know that bishops existed in this country before the arrival of Augustine. We know that Christianity must have been introduced into England by some who sided with the Eastern church in matters in which that church differed from the church of Rome. We know that some of the early English bishops were ordained by missionaries from Scotland. And we know that at all times during

the reign of popery foreign episcopal influences were permitted to affect the integrity and purity of the succession in the Anglican church. Now, here are many chains to be accounted for, and of these each separate link must be vindicated and proved genuine; for if in any one of them there be a flaw, no person can tell how far or how fatally that may have affected the apostolical succession in this country. The task, then, which the Anglo-catholics have to achieve, before the claims which they found on the alleged transmission to them of official power from the apostles through an unbroken succession of bishops can be admitted, is to prove that, of all the hundreds of persons through whom the orders of the Anglican clergy have been conveyed to them, not one was affected by any of those canonical informalities, the existence of which is admitted by themselves to be sufficient to neutralise and nullify all official acts performed by the party in whose case it may have occurred.

To perceive the utter hopelessness of such a task, it is only necessary to consider those circumstances which are held by canonists as disqualifying for the episcopal office. These are such as the following:—being unbaptised; being unordained, or not having passed through the subordinate offices; being unconsecrated; being consecrated by only one bishop; being under age; having obtained the see by simony; being ordained by the bishop of another

province; entertaining heretical opinions; being given to gambling and intoxication; having been elected by force; and others such like.¹ Now here are ten distinct ways in which at least the apostolic virtue might be nullified in the case of those who are said to have dispensed it. Who shall be bold enough to maintain that, in the thousands of cases by which the orders of the Anglican clergy are affected, not one of these disqualifying circumstances existed? "To know this one thing," we may say to the Anglicans as Chillingworth said to the papists, "you must first know ten thousand others, whereof not any one is a thing that can be known, there being no necessity that it should be true, which only can qualify any thing for an object of science, but only at the best a high degree of probability that it is so. But then, that of ten thousand probables, no one should be false; that of ten thousand requisites, whereof any one may fail, not one should be wanting, this to me is extremely improbable, and even cousin-german to impossible. So that the assurance hereof is like a machine composed of an innumerable multitude of pieces, of which it is strangely unlike but some will be out of order; and yet if any one be so the whole fabric will of necessity fall to the ground:

¹ The reader will find authority for these in the following books: —Andreae Synops. Juris Canonici, Lovanii, 1734. Caranzæ Summa Conciliarum, Duaci, 1679. Beveregii Pandectæ Canonum S. S. Apostoll. et Concill., 2 vols. folio, Oxon. 1672. Justelli Bibliotheca Juris Canon. &c. 2 vols. fol. Lutetiæ, 1661.

and he that shall put them together, and maturely consider all the possible ways of lapsing and nullifying a priesthood in the church [catholic], I believe will be very inclinable to think, that it is a hundred to one, that, amongst a hundred seeming priests, there is not one true one.”¹

To this it is usual for catholics to reply that it presents a grossly exaggerated statement of the difficulties of their case. They maintain that we have no reason to regard the regular and canonical transmission of orders, from age to age, as so extremely improbable as to be next to impossible, for that, as we see no possibility of any fatal irregularities occurring in the church now, there is sufficient reason to infer that none such have been possible in the times that are past. But in this reply a great deal more is assumed than can be conceded by any one who has respect to truth. Even were it certain that no irregularities could occur in the present day, there would not be the shadow of a reason in this for inferring that none could have happened in any of the preceding ages through which the church has passed. There have been seasons in her history of great public confusion, when all social order has been “turned upside down,” and when it is to the last degree improbable that the minutiae of ecclesiastical order could be attended to. There have been seasons of

¹ Religion of Protestants, &c., ch. ii. § 68. Works, vol. i. p. 249, 8vo, Lond. 1820.

fiery trial through which the church has had to pass, during which the believers have been glad to snatch such fragments of spiritual sustenance as they could reach, without having either inclination or opportunity to scrutinise very narrowly the canonicity of the medium through which it was conveyed to them. There have been times too of great moral declension and corruption in the church, when all laws, human and divine, have been made to bend to the unbridled indulgence of lust, ambition, and avarice on the part of the clergy. As a fair specimen of the state of things during such seasons (and of such were the greater part of the centuries preceding the Reformation), it is utterly preposterous to take the state of things in the present day, and in this country, where order is established, law respected, good morals inculcated, all clerical appointments made in open day and under the salutary control both of the civil power and public opinion. The just inference from a comparison of the times preceding the Reformation with the present would be, that as now we see ecclesiastical order secured by the authority of law and the influence of good manners, so, in former times, the absence of these causes could only be productive of irregularity, confusion, and mischief in the church.

But it is not upon the balance of conflicting probabilities merely that this question depends. We have the testimony of indisputable facts in support

of the assertion that innumerable irregularities, and these of the grossest kind, have occurred in the government of the church at different periods. As early as the end of the third century, we read of one who obtained consecration as a bishop by inveigling "three bishops, rustic and very simple men," into bad company, where they got intoxicated, and whilst "in a crapulous state" were constrained to lay hands on him.¹ In the account of the proceedings of the council at Nice, mention is made of one Melitius who, after being deposed by his superior, went about conferring ordination, and whose ordinations the council agreed to admit, on condition that those by whom they had been received should occupy a sort of second place to those who had been catholically ordained.² In the 4th century, we find Jerome complaining of the profligacy, the avarice, and general corruption of the clergy of all ranks.³ Gregory of Nazianzum complains bitterly and frequently of the same thing; telling us in one place that "bishoprics were obtained not by virtue but by craft, and were the perquisite not of the worthiest but of the strongest;"⁴ in another place denouncing some who could be "Simon Magus to-morrow, though to-day

¹ Euseb. Hist. Eccles. Lib. vi. ch. 43. Compare the note of Vale-sius in loc. Ed. Heinichen, tom. ii. p. 271.

² Socratis H. E. Lib. i. ch. 9. Sozomeni H. E. Lib. i. ch. 24.

³ In Ep. ad Tit. i. 8. Ep. 34, ad Nepotianum. Ep. 18, ad Eustochium. See the originals in Gieseler's Kirchengeschichte, B. i. s. 589, &c.

⁴ Orat. 43 in laudem Basil. c. 26, ap. Gieseler l. c.

Simon Peter,"¹ and in another informing us of one who, though unbaptised and unconverted, was forced by the populace to assume the office of bishop.² This happened also in the case of Ambrose bishop of Milan, who describes himself as not "nursed in the bosom of the church, but snatched from the courts of law," and compelled to be a bishop.³ The case of Synesius bishop of Cyrene was analogous; he tells us that he would have rather died a thousand deaths than become a bishop,⁴ laments the loss of his hunting establishment and pursuits, acknowledges himself a sceptic on some points of the Christian religion, and claims the privilege of deceiving the people, on the ground that as darkness is good for those afflicted with ophthalmia, so a falsehood is advantageous to the mob, whilst truth may be noxious.⁵ Sulpicius Severus tells us that in his day "every thing was thrown into confusion by the discords of the bishops," and that by their vices all was rendered corrupt.⁶ During the middle ages things became worse and worse. Amid the obscurity which overhangs the church in her passage through that period little indeed is discernible, except irregularity and corruption. "We read," says an eloquent writer referring

¹ Carm. de se ipso ver. 430 *ibid*.

² Orat xix. cited in the notes to Hampden's Bampton Lectures, p. 401.

³ Ep. lxiii., *ibid*. p. 400.

⁴ Ep. xi. Presbyterio.

⁵ Ep. cv. Fratri.

⁶ Hist. Sacr. Lib. ii. c. 51.

to this period, “of sees of the highest dignity openly sold—transferred backwards and forwards by popular tumult—bestowed sometimes by a profligate woman on her paramour—sometimes by a warlike baron on a kinsman, still a stripling. We read of bishops of ten years old—of bishops of five years old—of many popes who were mere boys, and who rivalled the frantic dissoluteness of Caligula—nay, of a female pope. And though this last story, once believed throughout all Europe, has been disproved by the strict researches of modern criticism, the most discerning of those who reject it have admitted that it is not intrinsically improbable.”¹ The prevalence of irregularities such as these, so widely, and for so great a length of time, in the church, is utterly incompatible with any well-grounded confidence in the integrity of the chain of apostolical succession.

But this is not all. In the catalogue of the Anglican bishops itself there are flaws sufficient to overturn all claims framed on its supposed completeness.

To begin with Augustine himself, what a tissue of informalities do the few notices we possess of his history exhibit! His very mission to this country was an act of schismatical interference with the immunities of a church already existing. Of his consecration as a bishop we have no certain record: Bede says he was consecrated by Aetherius bishop of

¹ Edin. Rev. for Ap. 1839, p. 265.

Arles,¹ but Du Pin shows that no bishop of that name was then in possession of that see;² this much only is certain that he was not consecrated by the only parties who were canonically entitled to do it—the bishops already in Britain. His own acts in the consecration of bishops were most irregular, and though permitted by Pope Gregory, upon condition that in due season he should return to canonical order,³ (as if a *return* to order could remedy the breaches caused by previous irregularity!) they cannot be viewed in any other light than as entirely unauthorised upon any sound principle of canon law. Nor can his personal character be defended successfully against the charge of cruelty, extortion, and bloodshed, in his treatment of those of the British clergy who refused to submit to his sway.⁴

When we come to more recent times we encounter cases of canonical irregularity, enough to shake the

¹ Hist. Eccles. Lib. i. c. 27, sec. 58.

² Eccles. Hist. v. 90.

³ Bede, H. E. Lib. i. c. 27, sec. 64.

⁴ Jortin calls Augustine “a pretended apostle and sanctified ruffian.” Eccl. Hist. vol. iv. p. 417. Waddington says this is “passionate and unjust abuse,” Ch. Hist. ch. x. The language of Jortin is indeed coarse, but it will not be easy to exempt Augustine from the charge which it involves. The massacre of the monks of Bangor to the number of 1200, must, I fear, be laid at his door. Waddington says “it is, on the whole probable, that the event took place after the death of St Austin.” This is doubtful, but even granting it was the case, still there is no getting over the distinct testimony of Bede, the eulogist of Augustine, that the latter had *threatened* the British clergy with death for their obstinacy, (“fertur *minitans* prædixisse . . . ultionem essent mortis passuri,”) and that the massacre of the Bangorian clergy was “the fulfilment of his presage.”—Lib. ii. ch. ii.

confidence of all but those who are determined to believe, at all hazards, in the integrity of orders transmitted through the Anglican bishops. If we look to the time of the Reformation we see Henry VIII. assuming to himself the right of compelling all bishops to take out their commission from him;¹ and in the reign of his successor, we find that "the obedience of the clergy was enforced by the adoption of the principle that the appointment of bishops, like every other, was determined by the demise of the crown, which compelled all prelates to receive their bishopricks by letters-patent from the king, during good behaviour."² Are the advocates of apostolical succession in the Anglican church perfectly at ease, as to all that transpired affecting the bishops at the time of the Revolution? Have they, for instance, settled the troublesome question of Sancroft's deposition from the see of Canterbury, and the appointment of Tillotson in his place, on which, as Burnet tells us, there was at the time "a great deal of angry reading brought out on both sides to justify or condemn the proceedings."³ Nor is this the only difficulty in the case. Is it certain that Tillotson was not an unbaptised heretic, and an unordained pretender to holy orders, as well as a schismatical intruder into the office of another? As the son of

¹ Burnet's History of the Reformation.

² Macintosh's Hist. of England, vol. ii. p. 251.

³ Burnet's History of his own Times, bk. v. an. 1694.

an anti-pædobaptist it is next to impossible that he was baptised in infancy, and no record whatever exists of his baptism subsequently ; as little is there any evidence that he ever received deacon's orders ; and his priest's orders were obtained at the hands of Sydserfe, one of the Scottish bishops, who in this case went beyond his province, and whose ordinations were, as a whole, anything but regular, for Burnet tells us that he " did set up a very indefensible practice of ordaining all those of the English clergy who came to him, and that without demanding either oaths or subscriptions of them ;" a practice which the historian imputes to a desire to obtain a livelihood by the " fees that arose from the letters of orders so granted, for he was very poor."¹ One of Tillotson's successors in the see of Canterbury, Secker, was the son of a dissenter, and was baptised by a dissenting minister. This was the case also with the great Butler bishop of Durham ; so that these two had only this small advantage over Tillotson, that whilst he had no baptism at all, they had only such as persons whom catholics view as unauthorised intruders into the sacred office could give. Besides these irregularities there are, since the Reformation, about a score of the Anglican bishops of whose consecration no record is extant.² And Dr Whately assures us that, " even in

¹ Burnet's History of his own Times, bk. ii. an. 1661.

² The names of these are given in a valuable article on this question in the Presbyterian Review for April 1842, p. 30.

the memory of persons living, there existed a bishop concerning whom there was so much mystery and uncertainty prevailing, as to when, where, and by whom he had been ordained, that doubts existed, in the minds of many persons, whether he had ever been ordained at all.”¹ When to all this we add the multitudes of cases in which men of corrupt lives, of loose, heretical, and semi-infidel principles, or through the most unworthy and simoniacal practices have occupied the Anglican sees, one cannot but pity those who are so infatuated as to rest all ministerial standing and character on the imagined integrity of a chain, so many links of which are in all probability fictitious and not one of which can be proved to be sound.

My readers will now, I trust, see reason to conclude that what the author of Tract No. 7 calls “a fact too notorious to require proof,” is really one of the most dubious and uncertain positions on which a claim of prerogative was ever based. What should we think of a man who should claim a dormant peerage on such pretences as those on which the Anglican clergy claim spiritual descent from the apostles, — whose genealogy, when it came to be examined, was found to contain the names of persons who apparently never existed, of persons of whom it was not known which was the father and which the son

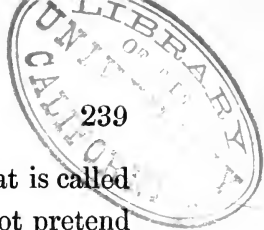
¹ Essays on the Kingdom of Christ, p. 178.

—one document averring that Richard was the son of John, and another that John was the son of Richard, while a third omitted the existence of Richard altogether—of persons of whose legitimacy there was no competent evidence, and of persons who seem never to have belonged to the family at all! Such a claim would be at once cast aside as ridiculous; and yet it is just upon such evidence as this that the successionists rest their claim to an official descent from the apostles, and demand, for that shadowy Eidolon which they have set up, the religious homage of “all people, nations, and languages.”

“I am fully satisfied,” says Bishop Hoadly, “that till a consummate stupidity can be happily established, and universally spread over the land, there is nothing that tends so much to destroy all respect to the clergy as the demand of more than can be due to them; and nothing has so effectually thrown contempt upon a regular succession of the ministry as the calling no succession regular but what was uninterrupted; and the making the eternal salvation of Christians to depend upon that uninterrupted succession, of which the most learned must have the least assurance, and the unlearned can have no notion but through ignorance and credulity.” Such is the opinion of apostolical succession, entertained by one of the very men who form the chain by which it is pretended that this succession has come down

from St Peter to the metropolitans of the Anglican church in the present day. Similar declarations might be produced from the writings of Jewel, Stillingfleet, Whately, and others, who have occupied a similar place in this pretended chain. When prelates themselves thus doubt or deny the existence of that power of which they are declared to be the sole inheritors and transmitters, it may be permitted to us, without exposing ourselves to the charge of presumption, to regard the whole of this pompous claim as the mere “baseless fabric of a vision.”

And yet it is not surprising that the catholics should cling to this doctrine of apostolical succession, and endeavour to support it by confident assertion in lieu of argument and evidence; for, in truth, it is upon this doctrine that their system mainly rests. Deprived of this, I know not that there remains any thing peculiar to their system for which they would be careful very anxiously to contend. On this the validity of their clerical orders rest; for, if they cannot trace these up to Christ as their source, in what respect do they, as ministers of Christ, differ from others who have the same title? On this rests their doctrine of an universal visible church; for it is through the regular succession of the bishops that the perpetuity and unity of the catholic church can be alone demonstrated. On this rests their claim to be considered priests; for, as they themselves are ready to tell us, in the words of Paul,—“No man



taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron;" and as they do not pretend to have received individually a personal call from God, it is essential to their claim that they be able to trace their spiritual lineage up to Him who had such a call, to Christ himself. Under these circumstances it is clear that the apostolical succession is a doctrine which their system cannot want. To invalidate it is to remove the corner-stone of their temple, and cast their idol in the dust.

Whether the nail on which they have thus chosen to hang all the glory of their house be fastened in a sure place, I leave it with the reader to judge.

SECTION II.

ORDINATION.

Pursuing the course already indicated, the next point which comes under our notice is the assertion of the catholics,—an assertion in which all consistent episcopalians unite,—that the only legitimate way in which a man can become a minister of the Christian church, is by being ordained to that office by the imposition on him of the hands of a hyper-presbyterial bishop. In meeting this assertion, one might deny the existence in the primitive churches

of any such functionary as a bishop, who was more than a presbyter or pastor of a church; and if this point were made good, it would, of course, overturn the position now under consideration, inasmuch as if there were no such bishops in the primitive church, there either must have been in those days no ordination to the pastoral office at all, or it must have been performed by other functionaries than hyper-presbyterial bishops. On this line of objection, however, it is not my intention to insist; for as I am not now concerned immediately in the examination of any opinions but those of the catholics, I wish to keep as free as possible from all questions not essentially involved in their doctrines. This, as has been already intimated, I consider to be the case with the question of the existence of diocesan bishops in the primitive church; for though it were proved that such functionaries had place there, it would by no means follow, that they possessed the exclusive privileges, and mighty spiritual powers, which, in the catholic system, are ascribed to them. Without, then, stopping at present to pronounce upon this much canvassed point, I proceed at once to enquire, whether scripture sanctions the opinion, that no man can be a legitimate minister of Christ, unless he has received ordination to that office by the communication to him, through the hands of the bishop, of a divine power. I can conceive of no means better adapted to the attainment of this end,

than to state briefly what the New Testament seems to indicate regarding the ordination of ministers in Christian churches.

1. It is distinctly prescribed, that *qualification for the office shall constitute an indispensable pre-requisite to the reception of it*. There is nothing in the New Testament to indicate, that even in the days of miraculous agency there was any such thing as constituting, by any ritual act, a man competent for the pastoral office, who was not in himself, and independently of all such acts, already qualified for its duties. Personal piety, unblemished reputation, holy zeal, and aptness to teach, are repeatedly set forth as qualities to be *required* in every one who desires the office of a pastor.¹ The notion that a man might want all these qualities, and yet be a competent minister of the New Testament notwithstanding, through the magic influence of episcopal ordination, is one of which the New Testament bears no traces. It is one of which, we may say, the churches even of the second and early part of the third centuries were quite ignorant. "He," exclaims Clement of Alexandria, "is a presbyter indeed of the church, and a true minister of the will of God, who does and teaches the things of the Lord; not ordained by men, nor deemed righteous because he is a presbyter, but enrolled in the presbytery because he is righteous."²

¹ See the Epistles to Timothy and Titus *passim*.

² Stromat. Lib. vi., cap. 13, sub. init.

It was reserved for a later age to teach, that though a minister may be "himself deficient and untaught, so that his sermons shall exhibit a wrong system of doctrine;" nay, may be a person of such unholy character, that, in his case, "the sacraments may be administered by hands which seem impure enough to sully their sanctity," he may, notwithstanding all this, by means of a single act, become a true minister of Jesus Christ, — "a messenger from the God of the whole earth,"—by whose words and offices a Christian congregation may be "instructed and nourished, though, in the main, the given lesson be falsehood, and the proffered sustenance little better than poison."¹ Compared with the sober, yet solemn declarations of the New Testament concerning the pastoral office, such language seems little better than the ravings of insanity.

2. It does not appear from any direct statement of the New Testament, *with whom the power of originally selecting the person who was to sustain the pastoral office in a church, was lodged.* That the people had a voice in the matter, may be inferred from the circumstance, that in the choice of other office-bearers and functionaries of the church, their suffrages were taken; but beyond this there is no direct evidence of any kind to substantiate their right to be consulted in the choice of their pastor. Hence our views in regard to the initiative in this matter

¹ Melvill's Sermons, vol. i., serm. 2.

will depend almost entirely on the view we take of the constitution of the early churches. A consistent episcopalian will naturally infer, that the right of nominating the person to occupy any vacant cure should be vested in the bishop of the diocese, with the advice, perhaps, of his council. A presbyterian, on the other hand, will be led by his peculiar views to suppose this right lodged in the presbytery, or supreme court of the church. And finally, the independent, believing that there existed no ecclesiastical power in the early church above that vested by Christ in each individual society of his people, will be led to maintain the right of the people to choose, freely and without any limitation, their own spiritual president and teacher. To this last view I, as an individual, subscribe; and I believe the more the subject is investigated, the more it will be found that it accords with all that can be gathered relating to this subject from the New Testament, and from the records of early ecclesiastical history. It is undeniable, in the *first place*, that in the New Testament there is nothing against this opinion. No precept, no principle, no practice, of which we have notice there, militates against the assumption, that the people had the free and unfettered choice of their own pastors,—that they could select whom they pleased, and from whatever class they pleased,—always, of course, under the condition, that those selected were men possessing the qualifications speci-

fied by the apostle. Even of this also it would appear, that none other than the members of the church themselves were entitled to be the judges. The only cases in which any thing like prescription occurred, were those in which God himself, by means of his inspired servants, was pleased to appoint whom He would have the people to choose,—cases which, as they never can occur in modern times, can form no rule in this respect for us. *Secondly*, As it is allowed on all hands, that in the primitive churches the support of the pastor was provided by the people of his charge, it seems only reasonable and necessary, that they who supplied the resources should have full liberty to choose the individual by whom these were to be enjoyed. Some, I know, will reply, that this was only a temporary arrangement, not designed to be binding beyond the continuance of a peculiar emergency. This opinion, however, is not only purely gratuitous, but it is inconsistent with the principle, that the order prescribed by the apostles in the churches which they planted, is that which Christians in all succeeding ages are bound to follow,—a principle, the maintenance of which is indispensable to all who would place their church polity on any other basis than that of a fluctuating and uncertain expediency. Besides, the *fact* still remains, that for the first three centuries after Christ, the churches supported each its own pastor; and with this remains the legitimacy

of the inference deducible from the fact as to the right of the people in these churches to choose their pastor. *Thirdly*, Supposing the choice to rest with the people, it is easy to account for the absence from scripture of any direct precept or information on the subject; whilst this silence is not so easily accounted for on any other supposition. In the absence of divine prescription upon this subject, the choice falls, *in the nature of things*, upon the people. Each of them has a conscious interest in the matter; and in them as a body the right of selecting the individual by whom their spiritual and eternal interests may be materially affected, is, strictly speaking, inherent. Of no other person or body, however, can this be said. The interest which persons who are not members may have in any church is not personal; the right which such may have to regulate the affairs of that church cannot be inherent. It must, therefore, in order to exist at all, be matter of *prescription*; and where it cannot be shown to be prescribed, it cannot be shown to exist. My argument, then, is this: As no passage from the New Testament can be adduced, authorising any man or body of men to dictate to a Christian church as to their choice of a pastor, there is no person or body by whom such power can be lawfully claimed; so that it devolves upon the people themselves, whose right, being natural and inherent, needed not to be prescribed. *Lastly*, The voice of ecclesiastical his-

tory is clear and decisive as to the fact, that for several centuries after our Lord's ascension, the right of electing their pastors was claimed and exercised by the people. The evidence of this position has been so often stated, and is so easily accessible in a variety of works, that I shall not occupy space by detailing it.¹ Suffice it to remark, that if this was the practice of all the churches for the first three centuries after Christ, it must either have been instituted by the apostles, or it must have grown up as the corruption of a later age. Should any adopt the latter opinion, it will be incumbent on them to show about what time, and by what means, this corruption began to manifest itself, as well as to account for the strange circumstance, that whilst all other corruptions in the government of the churches tended to the aggrandisement of the power and influence of the pastors at the expense of the people, there should have occurred this solitary instance of the people's usurping a power which, fully exercised, would have neutralised all the unrighteous authority of their pastors, and preserved the due balance of power between both parties in the church.

¹ See especially King's *Inquiry into the Constitution, &c. of the Primitive Church*, chap. ii.; Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, bk. iv., ch. ii., sec. 2, 3, 4, &c. Suiceri *Thes. Eccles.*, sub voce *ἐπισκοπος* ii. 1, α; Blackmore's *Summary of Christian Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 3; Rheinwald's *Kirchliche Archæologie*, sec. 17; Gieseler's *Kirchengeschichte*, bd. i., s. 298; Mosheim, *de reb. Christ.*, sæc. i., sec. 39, 45; Waddington's *Church Hist.*, chap. ii.; Bennet's *Congregational Lecture for 1841*, p. 244.

These considerations derive unqualified support from the fact admitted now by all our best ecclesiastical historians, that the primitive churches stood independent of each other, and of all external authority in regard to the management of their affairs. This is stated as an incontrovertible fact by Mosheim, Neander, Gieseler, Waddington, and Campbell; and I know not indeed any of our really learned historians who pretend to doubt it. Now, assuming this fact, there can be no further doubt as to the question now before us. If the early churches were independent communities, each managing its own affairs, the choice of the pastors *must* have been vested in the members of each church; for in that case there was no other quarter in which we can suppose this power to have been lodged.

3. When the people had selected their pastor, *it was usual for him to be ordained*, or set apart to office by a solemn act of devotion, accompanied with the laying on of the hands of persons already invested with office in the church. This seems to have been the customary mode of designating any individual who had been previously selected to occupy a particular sphere of labour, or discharge some official function. Thus, when the multitude in the church at Jerusalem had chosen the seven deacons, the apostles “prayed and laid their hands on them.”² The same was done by the pro-

¹ See APPENDIX, Note Q.

¹ Acts vi. 6.

phets and teachers in the church at Antioch to Paul and Barnabas, when they were separated to the work whereunto God had called them.¹ And when Timothy was chosen by the apostle Paul to be his companion and assistant in preaching the gospel, he presented him to the presbytery of the church at Lystra, by the laying on of whose hands, as well as those of the apostle, he was set apart for his work.² In these cases the principle of procedure plainly was, that where God did not himself appoint, the right of selecting the functionary lay with those who had the deepest personal interest in the duties he was selected to discharge; but that over and above this, there was an act of inauguration, or setting apart, performed by persons already invested with office, and consisting in the offering up of prayer for the individual, and the imposition on him of their hands.

By some this imposition of hands has been regarded as connected solely with the communication to the party of miraculous power, and not, therefore, proper to be used when no such power is conferred. This, however, is obviously a mistake; for, in the first place, there is no instance in which it can be shown that this act, when exercised in the way mentioned, *i. e.* in the setting apart with prayer of persons selected to fill office in a Christian church ever communicated spiritual gifts; and, secondly, in one,

¹ Acts xiii. 3.

² 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6.

at least, of the cases above noticed,—that of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch,—this could not have been the design of the act, as probably both of them, one of them certainly, already possessed the power of working miracles. The imposition of hands seems to have been nothing more than a ritual solemnity, employed in all grave cases where blessing was invoked, or religious designation implied; and in such cases as the ordination of a church officer serving an end analogous to that which in civil affairs is served by the coronation of a prince who *already* is the rightful possessor of the throne, or the installation of a public officer who has *already* been, by the suffrages of his countrymen, constituted possessor of the dignity with which he is invested.

That the practice followed in the cases of the seven deacons, in that of Paul and Barnabas, and in that of Timothy, was followed also in the appointment of men to the office of pastor, is apparent from the brief, but not indistinct notices affecting this point which occur in the New Testament. Thus in the account of the proceedings of Paul and Barnabas, we read that “they ordained them elders” (literally, stretched out the hand upon elders for them, *i. e.* the people,¹) “in every church.” In

¹ Χειροτονήσαντες δὲ αὐτοῖς πρεσβυτέρους. Acts xiv. 23. The verb here used is employed also in chap. x. ver. 41, to denote the appointment by God of the apostles as witnesses for Christ. This shows how untenable is the opinion of those who would understand by this verb, in all cases, “electing by a show of hands.”

1 Tim. v. 22, Paul charges his young representative, after speaking of the case of elders, to “lay hands suddenly upon no man.” And to Titus he had given the charge when he left him in Crete, to “ordain elders in every city.” Putting these passages together, and remembering that they are the *only* passages in the New Testament which bear upon the subject, it would surely argue a very unreasonable degree of scepticism were we to doubt or deny the fact, that in the primitive churches the usual, the orderly, the becoming, (though circumstances might prevent its being the invariable) method of settling a pastor in his charge, was by a solemn act of prayer, accompanied with the imposition of hands.

A question which has been more keenly agitated than this, however, is: By what class of officers in the church was the power of officiating at the ordination of ministers possessed? The answer which a survey of the passages already referred to, and which form the whole of those bearing upon this subject, enables us to give to this question, is very brief. When the act of ordination was not performed by apostles or evangelists, it was performed by ordinary pastors, teachers, or elders, as in the case of Paul and Barnabas, or by them in conjunction with an apostle, as in the case of Timothy. From this the natural inference is, that as the extraordinary officers of the early churches no longer exist, this duty devolves exclusively upon the ordinary

pastors and elders. The inference drawn by episcopalians from the part taken by the apostles and evangelists in ordinations, in support of their opinion that this duty belongs exclusively to the bishops, is utterly untenable. It rests exclusively on the assumption that bishops are the official successors of the apostles—an assumption already disproved, and one which, even were it established, would only go to show that bishops might *share* with presbyters in this act, as Paul shared with the presbytery of the church at Lystra in the ordination of Timothy. As to the argument founded on the cases of Timothy and Titus in favour of exclusive episcopal ordination, it is obviously a mere *petitio principii*. Ordination, say those who urge this argument, is the peculiar function of a bishop, because Timothy and Titus, who were bishops, discharged this function without the co-operation of any other parties; and then when challenged to prove that Timothy and Titus were bishops, their readiest argument is, that they performed the act of ordination, which, they say, can be performed only by a bishop. Thus they argue in a circle, making a thing the reason of itself, and by a process of subtracting equals from equals, leaving *nothing* as the result.

From these considerations it appears that whilst there was in the primitive churches a ceremony of ordination at the settling of a Christian pastor over a church, it was nothing more than a mere decent

and solemn form of introducing the individual to his office, for which he was previously qualified and of which he was already in possession, performed by parties who had no authority to communicate to him, and implying on their part nothing more than a cordial approbation of the choice of the church, a fraternal regard for the individual chosen, and a readiness to co-operate with him in all that concerned the interests of their common cause.¹ These simple views of this ordinance seem to have continued for a considerable time after the age of the apostles; at least, we find no trace of any others till towards the middle of the third century, when the gradual engrafting upon Christianity of ideas borrowed from the ritual of the Jews, had accustomed the minds of the Christians to regard their ministers as belonging to a distinct order from themselves, and invested with sacerdotal power.² To this the action of laying on hands in the setting apart of the ministers doubtless contributed; for as that action was used by the apostles in communicating spiritual gifts, as well as in the ritual of ordination, it would be very easy for

¹ "The imposition of hands on the minister, when all is done, will be nothing but a designation of a person to this or that office, or employment in the church. 'Tis a ridiculous phrase that of the canonists, *conferre ordines*. 'Tis *cooptare aliquem in ordinem*; to make a man one of us, one of our number, one of our order." Selden, Table Talk, p. 104. Edinburgh 1819. Comp. Fuller's Works, vol. v. p. 280. London 1832.

² See Gieseler's Kirchen Gesch., bd. i. s. 187, 296. Bennet's Congregational Lecture, Lect. iv.

the bishops, when they came to call themselves the successors of the apostles, to persuade the multitude that that act, as practised by them in ordination, had the same effect as when practised by the apostles for the purpose of endowing men with miraculous intelligence and power. Certain it is, that from the time referred to, it became common to ascribe very mysterious efficacy to this act in episcopal ordination. By means of it, men who had been before ignorant, or weak, or even heathen and profligate, suddenly were transformed into priests of the Most High God—the keepers of the spiritual interests of the church,—and the accredited intercessors between God and his worshippers. The length to which these absurdities were carried in the 4th and 5th centuries would be almost incredible, did we not see opinions of the same sort abundantly avowed in the present day. Amidst all this tide of clerical pretension, however, it is consolatory to think that the stream cannot be traced back to the fountain-head of Christianity—that it had its rise from a source which has in it nothing perennial,—and that, consequently, we may confidently indulge the hope that in due season the hasty torrent will be exhausted, and that men will turn for refreshment and strength to the noiseless but copious stream of regenerating truth,—that river which has its source on Calvary, and whose life-giving waters shall never fail.

SECTION III.

PRIESTHOOD OF THE CLERGY.

Those who regard episcopal ordination as conferring peculiar gifts upon the Christian pastor, do not content themselves with affirming this in merely general terms, but are careful also to specify the nature of that power with which he is thus invested, by claiming for him the rank and authority of a priest. It is not intended by them, in applying this title to the Christian minister, to speak figuratively or analogically, as if nothing more were meant by it than that such a functionary sustains to the people of his charge, a relation which, in regard to its importance, its eminence, and its sacredness, might be compared to that which the ancient priests bore to the people of Israel. The term is understood by them literally, and without a figure. Whatever of dignity surrounded the Levitical priesthood, with whatever awful responsibilities its members were charged, whatever of submission to their words and dependence on their offices they demanded from the people, and whatever of divine virtue they were empowered to convey to those who submitted devoutly to their ritual, is represented as having been transferred, whole and undiluted, nay, with considerable additions, to

those ministers of the New Testament, who have received ordination from the bishops of the catholic church. They, and they alone, it is affirmed, are true ministers in the Christian temple, because they alone have been called of God to be priests, as was Aaron.

The imposing nature of these pretensions, and the confidence with which they are advanced, render it necessary that we should enquire carefully into their soundness and scriptural authority.

I. Now, at the outset, it must appear to every one who is accustomed to the study of the apostolic writings, that it is extremely *unlikely* that under the Christian dispensation such an arrangement, as the existence of priestly mediators between God and his people, should be found. It cannot have escaped the attention of the most cursory reader of these writings, that their authors continually represent the priesthood of Christ as the fulfilling of all that was typified in the priestly office among the Jews, the sacrifice of Christ as the one great and all-sufficient atonement for sin, and the intercession of Christ as the sole medium through which the sinner has to seek acceptance with God. In connection with these announcements, it must also have been observed that the apostles distinctly teach that through this medium a free path of access unto God lies open to all, and to all alike; that it is the duty and privilege of each man who hears these good news to draw nigh unto God, through this new and living way; that prayers, alms,

gifts, and all other appropriate expressions of gratitude to God, are the sacrifices which the believer is enjoined to lay upon the altar of devotion in the name of Christ;¹ and that, in accordance with this, all true Christians are represented as priests unto God, “a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”² Now, with these truths obtruded upon us throughout the apostolic writings, one is at a loss to conceive what place there can be, or what occasion for, an official priesthood in the church. If Christ’s sacrifice be such as to supersede all others; if Christ be the Great High Priest of his church; if his intercession be a sufficient medium of access for all men unto God; and if all may, and ought through him, to approach unto God, and offer to him such sacrifices as alone are acceptable in his sight,—what possible necessity can there be for *another* priest between God and the Christian, or how is such an one to discharge any priestly function without trenching upon the prerogative of Christ on the one hand, or on the privileges of his people upon the other? At first sight it certainly does appear that such an officer, as a human priest in the church, is a sort of superfluity—an awkward and incongruous appendage to the system, that looks as if it had been

¹ See the reasoning of the apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews ch. vii.—ix.

² Hebrews x. 19—20; 1 John ii. 1, 2; Romans xii. 1; 1 Peter ii. 4—10.

forced upon it for some purpose or other, without having been at all contemplated in the original design. Let us not say the thing is *impossible*;—it may be; if the New Testament says so, it must be; but one may affirm it seems to the last degree unlikely, and not to be admitted, save on the fullest and most incontrovertible scriptural evidence.

II. When we proceed to examine the New Testament on this subject, the first thing which must strike the enquirer is, that if the apostles meant to teach that the Christian ministry is a priesthood, it is passing strange that though freely using sacerdotal language to express their ideas on many points, they have not, in one single instance, employed such language to designate the office or functions of a Christian pastor! Amongst the numerous names which this officer receives in the New Testament that of *priest* does not once occur, and in no instance are the duties of the office described by the most distant allusion to the temple service. Can this fact be accounted for on the supposition that the ministers of Christ are priests? Why this careful neglect of the name, this scrupulous avoidance of anything like sacerdotal phraseology, in speaking of ministers, if they are in reality priests, and have to discharge priestly functions? It was not so under the ancient dispensation, when the ministers of the sanctuary were priests. In the Old Testament, the term priest is that most commonly used to designate them, their

sacerdotal character and functions are often enlarged upon, and the most distinct instructions are given to the people to avail themselves of their services, as the only appointed medium of access to God. Why should it be otherwise in the New Testament, unless it be because the ministers whose office it sets forth are *not* priests?

III. But it may be said, that though the New Testament does not *directly* use sacerdotal language in reference to the office of Christian ministers, the language which it does use is such as to *imply* the possession by such of sacerdotal functions. In support of this, reference is made to such passages as the following:—"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God,"¹ &c. From these passages it is argued, that Christ invested his ministers with sacerdotal power, and that the apostle claims this power when he calls himself and those associated with him "stewards of the mysteries of God." Now, on this reasoning, I have to remark, 1st, That of these pas-

¹ Matt. xvi. 19; John xx. 23; 1 Cor. iv. 1.

sages the first two were addressed exclusively to the apostles. It was to Peter that Christ gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and it was on the whole body of the apostles that he conferred the power of remitting or retaining sins. Whatever dignity or power, then, these passages may ascribe to the parties to whom they relate, it does not surely follow that the same belongs to any other party to whom we may *choose* to apply them. What was true of an apostle is not necessarily true of one who is not an apostle. If, indeed, it could be shown that the clergy are the successors of the apostles, such a transference of words used concerning the office of the one to the office of the other might be possible. But this, we have already seen, is not the case; so that even were it admitted, that in these passages the possession of priestly power by the apostles is indicated, it would not follow that to such power the clergy of the catholic church have the least claim.

But, *2dly*, It may be asked, *Do* these two passages really prove, that on the apostles priestly power was conferred? Is the power of binding and loosing, or as it is explained in the other passage, the power of forgiving or retaining sins, a power belonging properly to the *priestly* office? This it will not be easy, I apprehend, to prove. Under the Old Testament economy the priests evidently had no such power. It was their business to make atonement and intercession for the people; but it was a settled principle

in Jewish theology, and one which was often cast in the way of our Lord himself by the Jews, that no one can forgive sins but God only. If, then, the apostles had the power of forgiving sins, it must have been in virtue of the *new* commission they had received. This was a *peculiarity* of their apostolical office, and not an engrafting on that office of an old priestly function. Whatever of power, then, or dignity this might confer upon them, it affords no evidence that they were constituted priests, any more than it affords evidence that they were constituted kings. And as their successors (supposing such to exist) cannot, in virtue of descent from them, claim an office which they never held, it is plainly illogical and absurd to found upon these passages any argument in favour of the doctrine, that the clergy, as the alleged successors of the apostles, are priests.

3dly, There appears to be no evidence whatever that the apostles understood these words of our Lord as conveying to them personally the power of forgiving or retaining the sins of individuals. Had they done so, they would, doubtless, on some occasion or other have exercised the power with which they were thus entrusted; and as certainly would such instances have been recorded for the instruction of succeeding ages. Of this, however, there is no trace in their subsequent history and writings. We read of their teaching, commanding, and working miracles in the name of Christ; but not one instance

occurs of their pronouncing absolution of sins over any person. On the contrary, their continual doctrine to men was, that it was God, and God only, that could forgive their transgressions; and they ceased not to exhort their hearers to ask forgiveness, each one for himself, in the name of Christ. Now, how is this to be accounted for, on the supposition that Christ had given them power personally to forgive sins as they saw meet? We dare not say that they were *neglectful* of the gift Christ had given them; for this were to charge them with the gravest offence of which, as apostles, they could be guilty. As little may we affirm, that they were *afraid* to exercise so awful a power; for this were to charge them with being afraid to do what Christ had empowered them to do,—conduct of which it is difficult to say whether the unfaithfulness or the cowardice be most reprehensible. How, then, is their conduct to be explained?

May it not with justice be affirmed, that this fact—that the apostles never, on any occasion, so far as we know, even apparently assumed to themselves the power of personally absolving men from their sins—throws an interpreting light over the words of Christ, and suggests a meaning entirely different from what has, by catholics, been ascribed to them? Does it not, at least, favour the conclusion, that in using them the Saviour did not confer any power on the apostles *over individuals*; but spoke simply of the

authority with which, as his commissioned ambassadors, they were empowered *to announce to men generally the terms of salvation*,—the conditions on which sin would be forgiven, and on which it would be retained?¹ This charge they fulfilled when they preached unto men “repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.” And having done this once by their inspired writings, they have done it *once for all*. The ambassador has communicated his message; and there it lies, that each may inspect it and follow it for himself. After this no new embassy is needed. The terms of admission into the kingdom of heaven are already fully and clearly specified. It is for each man to accept of them and enter, so that his sins may be forgiven; or to reject them, and so have his sins retained. Thus it is, that by the words which they spake and wrote, the apostles do still bind and loose, forgive and retain. In their hands are the keys of the kingdom of heaven. By their message may each man deter-

¹ In Lightfoot's note on Matt. xvi. 19, in his *Horæ Hebraicæ*, the reader will find most abundant evidence in proof of the position laid down by that great scholar, “that the phrase to bind and to loose, which was very much used in the Jewish schools, had a reference to *things*, and not to *persons*, as, indeed, in this very passage, and in chap. xviii. 18, the use of the neutre relatives *ἃ* and *ἃντα*, would indicate.” After giving thirty instances from Jewish writers of the use of the phrase, he gives the result as follows:—“1. It is used in teaching, and in judging regarding things lawful and things not lawful; 2. *To bind* is the same as to *forbid*, or *declare a thing forbidden*; *to loose* is to *permit*, or *declare a thing permitted*.” See also the Notes of Calvin and Whitby on the passages.

mine for himself his spiritual condition and destiny. He that believeth their words shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.

In these passages, then, our Lord announces to the apostles their peculiar duty as the unfolders, by especial authority, of his religion to the world. As in this they neither needed, nor could have successors, these passages prove nothing respecting any part either of the claims or functions of the pastoral office.

4thly, With regard to the other passage above quoted, in which the apostle speaks of himself and his associates as “ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God,” it is admitted that it cannot be shown to apply exclusively to the apostles, for Paul evidently includes Apollos along with Cephas and himself (see iii. 22) in the number of those of whom he here speaks, (if, indeed, we are not to regard him as speaking generally of all who act the part of teachers in the church.¹) As little, however, can it be turned to favour the opinion that Christian ministers are invested with the office of priests. The ground on which this is attempted is the assertion, that by “the mysteries of God” here spoken of are intended the sacred rites which a clergyman is alone entitled to perform, and by which he materially influences the spiritual destinies of his flock. Whether

¹ This is the opinion of Calvin, Estius, Pott, Krause, Olshausen, and most of the interpreters.

this, even were it granted, would prove Christian ministers to be priests in the Bible sense of that term, and not rather a sort of spiritual exorcists or magicians, may admit of question; but waiving this, let us see how far such an interpretation of the language of the apostle will bear the test of examination. The due decision of this point depends on our rightly ascertaining what those things are to which the New Testament writers apply the term "mystery;" and in no way can this be done satisfactorily but by a careful examination of each passage in which the word occurs. When this is done, (and I must request each reader to do it for himself, as it would occupy too large a space to attempt it here,¹) it will be found, 1. That the word "mystery" is always used in the New Testament of something which is to be *taught* and *learned*, never of anything which is to be *done* and *experienced*; and, 2. That it is never applied to anything *hidden*, *dark*, or *unrevealed*, but always means something which, though beyond the reach of man's natural powers of discovery, and perhaps as to its mode of existence incomprehensible by man even when revealed, has *been made manifest*, so as that it may be *known and believed by all*. Now, if such be the usage of the word in the New Testament generally, upon what principle can a different meaning be pleaded for as attaching to it here? If a mys-

¹ See APPENDIX, Note R.

tery be not something which is done *on* us, but something which is to be announced, taught, or preached *to* us, what affinity can it have with a set of outward rites, the whole efficacy of which must consist in their being performed by a suitable functionary who is supposed to be endowed with power through them to influence those who submit to them? That any man should be possessed of such a power may in the conventional sense of the word be *mysterious* enough; but that it is to this the apostle alludes in the passage under notice there is not the shadow of evidence. The only conclusion to which sound principles of interpretation will allow us to come is, that by mysteries here Paul means *revealed truths*, and especially that great cardinal truth of Christianity which he elsewhere calls the “great mystery of godliness,” —“the mystery of the faith,” —“the mystery that had been kept secret since the world began, but is now made manifest and known unto all nations for the obedience of faith.”¹ Of this the ministers of Christ may justly be called “the stewards or dis-

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 16; *ibid.* ver. 9; Rom. xvi. 25. In support of the view above taken, I cannot do better than quote the note of Estius on the passage:—“*Mysteria quidam interpretantur sacramenta novæ legis, i. e., sensibilia signa ad sanctificationem nostram a Christo Domino instituta, quorum primum est baptismus. Sed cum ipse Paulus dixerit Imo capite: Non misit me Christus baptizare, sed evangelizare; rectius est ut mysteria Dei intelligantur fidei nostræ dogmata a Deo revelata. Quæ quidem mysteria dicuntur, quia secreta sunt, et absque Dei revelatione cognosci nequeant. Ea mysteria sunt incarnationis, passionis, et resurrectionis Christi, redemptionis nostræ, vocationis gentium et cetera, quæ complectitur evangelica doctrina.*”

pensers," (*οἰκονόμους*), for it is their official duty to "feed the flock of God," "rightly dividing the word of truth."¹ As good servants of Christ, they are bound to dispense to the members of his household "their meat in due season;" and as the only food by which the people of God can be spiritually sustained is that which is provided for them in the gospel of Jesus Christ, it must be by dispensing to them of this that ministers are to prove themselves faithful as "stewards of the grace of God." To substitute for this a set of mere ceremonies which are expected to operate like a charm upon the people whether they understand their meaning or not, is to give them little better than the fare of the prodigal, or to inflict upon them the curse which God denounced against ancient Israel, when he said he would "feed them with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink."²

IV. The apostle, in speaking of the functions of the priestly office, says, (Heb. v. 1,) "every high-priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." The closing words of this verse clearly specify what is the peculiar and appropriate duty of a priest. As the representative of those for whom he is set apart, he must offer gifts and sacrifices for their sins. If, then, Christian

¹ 1 Pet. v. 1; 2 Tim. ii. 15.

² Jer. ix. 15.

ministers be priests, it is of necessity that they present offerings to God on behalf of their people, that through these they may procure for the parties in whose name they appear the divine favour and forgiveness. The question, then comes to be,—Is this the function of the Christian pastor? Is it his to offer sacrifice for the sins of his flock? Does he possess the privilege of appearing for them in the presence of God, and, through the power of his gifts and intercessions, propitiating the Divine Majesty on their behalf?

To these questions there are few who, in the present day, will be hardy enough to give a direct answer in the affirmative. The testimony of scripture is so plain and explicit as to the sole and absolute sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ for the pardon of sins, that any man who should now seriously propose to offer sacrifice for sins, would be looked upon either as a heathen or as mad. Avoiding, then, any direct answer to these inquiries, the catholics are in the habit of meeting them by pointing to the *sacraments*, as they call them, which it is the office of the clergy to administer; and by attributing to these a saving power in and by themselves when duly administered, they ascribe a powerful influence over the eternal destinies of men to those by whom alone they believe that these can be rightly dispensed. Now, this, be it observed, is a virtual giving up of the *priesthood* of the clergy. It is admitting that, as

they have no gifts or offerings to present, they are not, strictly speaking, priests. In this case, their assumption of the name of priests can be regarded in no other light than as the offspring of superstitious ignorance, or as a bait to delude the unwary.

But (not to insist too much on a word) though the privilege of administering the sacraments cannot constitute those by whom it is possessed priests, seeing these are not true and proper sacrifices, it must nevertheless be admitted, that if by means of these rites the clergy have power to influence the spiritual destinies of men, they are invested with power of the most awful kind—with power such as none of the Jewish priests ever possessed, for the utmost effect of their office reached only to “the purifying of the flesh,”¹ *i. e.* the removal of outward ceremonial defilement, the rest depending entirely upon the *use* which each individual made of the great spiritual lessons thus taught,—with power, therefore, which it would be in the last degree unwise to concede to any class of men, unless they can adduce the clearest evidence that it has been conferred upon them by God.

A better opportunity for examining into the nature and uses of baptism and the Lord’s supper, will be found in the two following chapters, where we shall be occupied with inquiring into the way in

¹ Heb. ix. 13.

which the blessings of Christianity are to be enjoyed by men. At present I shall confine myself to a few *general* remarks on the alleged spiritual power lodged in the hands of the clergy, in virtue of their being the appointed administrators of these ordinances.

1. When the supposed efficacy of the sacraments is adduced in support of the high pretensions of the Catholic clergy, the reasoning seems to partake very much of the nature of an argument in a circle. It cannot be denied that, as respects the mere external act, baptism and the Lord's supper may be administered, as well by a presbyterian or a congregationalist, as by an episcopalian clergyman. Are these ordinances, then, equally valid in the former case as in the latter? and, if not, wherein consists the difference? The reply to this is, that, in the latter case *alone* are they valid, because an episcopally ordained clergyman is alone competent to administer them. Then it is the official status of the administrator which gives these ordinances their value. But if so, how can the mere fact of his being the administrator of them prove him to be invested with priestly or quasi-priestly authority? Let it be shown that the sacraments are valid in themselves by whomsoever administered; and let it be shown that episcopally ordained ministers are alone authorised to administer them; and no one could object to the inference that the latter are thereby invested with great spiritual power. But to argue the authority of the clergy

from the validity of the sacraments, and then the validity of the sacraments from the authority of the clergy is mere child's play. It is a pitiful begging of the question. It is affirming that the clergy are invested with spiritual authority, just because they are invested with spiritual authority.

2. Assuming that there is a connection, such as that affirmed, between the priestly office of the clergy and the saving power of the sacraments, one would naturally expect to see it manifest itself in its effects. Let us suppose, for a moment, that among the Israelites an individual not called of God, as was Aaron, had taken it upon him to offer sacrifices, and make intercession for the people. In such a case, would there not have been some manifest token of the Divine displeasure with his conduct? We cannot doubt but that there would. Should we not look for something, then, of the same kind under the Christian dispensation, if its ministers be priests also? Must not God protect his own ordinance? and if men, unauthorised by him, presume to administer what he has appointed his priests to administer, is it not to be expected that he will manifest the difference between the one and the other, if not by punishment inflicted on the presumptuous schismatic, yet by rendering his services of no avail to those who receive them? It cannot be, that ordinances administered by one who has no right to administer them, can possibly be equally efficacious with those

administered by one who has been divinely qualified and appointed for this purpose. This brings the question before us to an appeal to facts. Let this appeal then be made. Let the results of ministerial labour in the catholic church be compared with the results of ministerial labour among the different bodies of evangelical Christians. Let it be asked whether a different result follows baptism in the one case, from what takes place in the other; whether all, or nearly all baptised by the priest, grow up regenerated and sanctified characters; whilst those baptised by ministers not episcopally ordained alone display the innate depravity of our nature when they become capable of acting for themselves. Or, let the effect of the observance of the Lord's supper, as administered by sacerdotal hands, be compared with the effect of it as administered by those of others. Let it be asked, Are those who partake of what they believe to be a sacrifice which the priest has consecrated, one whit more purified, comforted, strengthened thereby, than the humblest congregation of believers who sit down to the table of the Lord with no other view than that of commemorating his dying love? Let this comparison, I say, be made. Let it be made as extensively and minutely as possible. And if it be found that, in the one case, where a priest is the administrator, the promised effect is produced in the regeneration of the baptised, and the sanctification of the communi-

cant; whilst, in the other, little or no benefit accrues to any party from these ordinances, something worth the having will have been got to support the doctrine of priestly consecration. But if it be otherwise—as otherwise it certainly is—if it be—as all experience testifies—that children baptised by the priest are not one whit more holy than those baptised by one who makes no such pretension, and that the Lord's supper administered to pious persons is as comforting when received at the hands of a minister, as when received at the hands of a priest, whilst, to those who are not pious, it does no good, but much harm, by whomsoever administered—if this be found, then let it be remembered, that the only fair conclusion is, either that God's institution of a priesthood is a great failure, or that no such institution has been appointed by God in the Christian church. I leave with confidence the choice in this alternative to the reader's own judgment.

Lastly, If there be such an intimate connection as is affirmed between the power of the sacraments and the efficiency of the ministry, how comes it to pass, that so little is said in the New Testament concerning the administration of these by ministers. Of all the instances recorded in the Acts of the *success* of the apostles and other leaders of the church, not one is ascribed to the power of the sacraments, but all to the preaching of the word. Of the *claims* of the ministry upon the respect, the love, and the liberali-

ty of their flocks, not one is rested on their supposed possession of any mysterious sacerdotal power, but all on their zeal and diligence as the teachers and rulers of the church. And as respects their doctrine, whilst they are exhorted to preach, and teach, and set a good example before their flocks, there is not one passage *directly* enjoining them either to baptise or administer the Lord's supper; and it is only from the general spirit of the New Testament, and the few examples scattered throughout it, that we learn that to administer these ordinances is a duty of the pastoral office at all. Now, if any of my readers are inclined to the doctrine of the connection between sacramental efficacy and the priesthood of the clergy, I beg them to look at this fact, and account for it if they can on that hypothesis. According to that theory, Christian ministers have no function so peculiarly their own as administering the sacraments: This is what they are chiefly to do, for this they are chiefly to be had in "religious veneration," and it is by this their office is chiefly to be fulfilled. And yet in all the injunctions given to them in the New Testament, not one word is said of this part of their duties, and it is only probable, but by no means certain, that this forms a part of their peculiar duties at all! Is not this unaccountable? does it not clearly indicate that no such notion of the power of the sacraments in priestly hands was entertained by the apostles?

If these observations be correct, it appears that what we set out with affirming to be improbable, is in reality so utterly unsupported, that hardly the shadow of scriptural evidence can be adduced in its favour. The claims of the catholic clergy to be revered as priests, must, in this case, however strongly supported by Fathers, and councils, and bishops, be classed with those “lying wonders” by which the Man of Sin has from the first sought to uphold his unrighteous sway over the consciences of men. Were it not for that unhappy tendency, so common to our fallen family, towards “a vicarious religion”—a religion which enables the sinner to enjoy composure of mind whilst still wedded to his sins, on the fancied security of the church’s offices on his behalf,—such a baseless claim as this would never have been tolerated by any who were capable of thinking or judging for themselves. Let those who advance the claim be entreated to see to it, that they be not in this respect acting, not as the ministers, but as the foes of Christ, by serving the interests of that arch-deceiver, whose works the Son of God came to destroy.

Satisfied of the utter futility of those high pretensions which the catholic clergy advance, I fall back upon the simple institutions of the apostles regarding the pastoral office, and claim for all who, according to these institutions, have the oversight of Christian congregations, whatever of dignity, authority, and

respect belongs to the Christian minister. Did we not know the strong bias of the human mind towards what is outward and carnal in preference to what is spiritual, we should deem it strange that any should be found inclined to add to that office authority and sanctions of the kind we have been endeavouring to invalidate. To occupy the first place in a congregation of Christian men—to be entrusted with the oversight of their individual and collective spiritual interests—to be looked up to by them as their instructor in the truths of the Bible, their adviser in questions of duty, their leader in every good, virtuous, and holy enterprise—to be confided in as their friend and director in the hour of difficulty, adversity, or danger—to be appealed to as the arbiter of their differences, or the composer of their quarrels—to be a privileged partaker in almost every occasion among them of domestic happiness, a welcome sympathiser in every occasion of domestic grief—to be in many cases the first human being to whom the soul, stricken with a sense of sin, unfolds its anxieties, and prefers its entreaty for counsel—to be the last to whom, in many cases, the departing spirit reveals its feelings, and the tongue that is soon to be silent for ever tells its thrilling tale of triumph or dread;—to be all this is surely enough for ambition, if it be not more than enough for responsibility. To an office such as this it can bring no additional importance that the per-

son who sustains it should be surrounded by the trappings of sacerdotal pomp, or venerated as the awful possessor of an invisible and spiritual power. By all such additions, the entire character of the office is altered, its real dignity impaired, and its main usefulness destroyed. A vague feeling of awe comes in the place of that intelligent respect with which the people should regard their minister; a slavish and demoralising dependence on the office of the priest is substituted for enlightened and purifying submission to the lessons of the instructor; whilst the pastor himself sinks from the honourable place of the friend and counsellor of his flock, to that of a mere religious martinet, whose business it is to see that they go regularly through their appointed discipline, and whose grand aim is to maintain a dominion over their superstitious fears, which, after all, he must be content to share with the fortune-teller and the conjuror.

CHAPTER V.

JUSTIFICATION UNTO LIFE.

“ Ἡμεῖς διὰ θελήματος αὐτοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ κληθέντες, οὐ δι' ἑαυτῶν δικαιοῦμεθα, οὐδὲ διὰ τῆς ἡμετέρας σοφίας, ἢ συνέσεως, ἢ εὐσεβείας, ἢ ἔργων ὧν κατεργασάμεθα ἐν δειότητι καρδίας· ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς πίστεως, δι' ἧς πάντας τοὺς ἀπ' αἰῶνος ὁ παντοκράτωρ Θεὸς ἰδικαίωσεν.”

“ We, called by his will in Christ Jesus, are justified not through ourselves, nor through our own wisdom, or understanding, or godliness, or works which we have done in holiness of heart; but through that faith whereby God the Almighty hath justified all from the beginning.”—CLEMENS ROMANUS in 1 *Ep. ad Cor.* § 32.

THAT every man, as the descendant of Adam, comes into this world with a nature very different from that in which Adam was created; that in consequence of his possessing such a nature he is under a strong bias towards what is evil; and that in point of fact, he no sooner becomes capable of intelligent action, than he adds to his original depravity the guilt of actual sin, are statements, the truth of which may safely be taken for granted in the present inquiry.

It will also be admitted by all who adopt these statements, that in consequence of man's being in the condition which they predicate, he must lie under the sentence of the divine law, which by his

sins he has transgressed, and that, at the same time, he must have forfeited that complacent regard with which the Creator surveyed our first parents after they were formed, but which the infinite purity of his nature forbids him to extend to those who love and practise iniquity. From all this it follows, that before man can be fully saved from the consequences of his fallen condition, he must obtain forgiveness of the guilt with which he is chargeable, and cleansing from the moral defilement which he has contracted.

With this view the statements of scripture fully accord. Whilst the sacred writers clearly set before us at once our guilt and our pollution, they at the same time announce to us, that before we can be finally accepted by God, we must be pardoned for the one, and purified from the other. And that on which they ground the chief claim of their writings to the attention of mankind is, that in these is contained the divinely contrived, the divinely executed, and the divinely announced plan for effecting the deliverance of our race, at once from the curse of a violated law, and the domineering power of a depraved disposition.

To creatures situated as we are, no inquiry can be more important than that which respects our deliverance from the wretched and dangerous condition into which sin has brought us. To this inquiry the agitated conscience of man is incessantly

turning, even when under the benighting influence of heathenism; and there can be no true enjoyment of peace and hope, until the mind has found some solid basis on which an answer to it may be given. How anxiously, then, and gratefully ought we to bend our attention to what God has revealed to us on this head in that record of his will which he has graciously communicated to us!

In relation to this all-important inquiry a considerable difference exists between those whose sentiments are unfolded in the Tracts for the Times, and the majority of evangelical Christians. At the same time I am free to confess that in many quarters this difference has been exaggerated, and, in order to give countenance to the exaggeration, the opinions of the Tractarians have been considerably misrepresented and caricatured. This renders it necessary that I should detain the reader with one or two remarks of a preliminary nature, and in some degree exculpatory of my opponents, before proceeding to argue against those errors which unhappily they have mixed up with the truth, and by which, it is much to be feared, the truth itself will, to the mass of minds, be in no small degree obscured and impaired.

And, *first*, I cordially rejoice that both parties are at one as to the sole meritorious ground of a sinner's salvation. "The Anglican doctrine," says Dr Pusey, "directs men to look neither to their faith, nor to

their works, but to Christ alone, ‘the author and finisher of their faith.’”¹ The same truth is repeatedly advanced, both in his writings and those of Mr Newman, and that not hesitatingly or unwillingly, as if they were making a concession they could not help, but heartily and earnestly, as a tenet which they deem essential to the Christian religion.

Secondly. Dr Pusey proposes to take up a middle position between those who teach men to look for peace to their own experience—to the real or supposed accordance of their desires and emotions with what God requires for salvation,—and those who teach that peace is to be obtained by the act of a priest pronouncing on the penitent absolute remission of sins. Whether he is correct in charging the former opinion on the evangelical party in his own church, and on the followers of the Lutheran doctrine concerning justification in general; and whether he is quite successful in keeping his own views free from an approximation, at least, to the latter, are points which may admit of question. In so far, however, as his *language* in regard to this point amounts to a protest against these opposite opinions, it is language to which I cordially assent. Whilst repudiating the Romish doctrine of priestly absolution as no less presumptuous and daring on the part of him by whom it is taught,

¹ Letter to the Bishop of Oxford, p. 77.

than delusive, and hardening in its effects upon those who receive it, I must, at the same time, disclaim all inclination towards that system which leads a man who is in anxiety concerning the state of his soul, to take searching account of the frames and feelings through which he may pass before he can regard himself as entitled to enjoy favour in the sight of God through Christ. Whilst the former system tends to induce men to look for salvation to the priest, the latter no less tends to induce them to look for salvation to themselves. In both cases the real ground of a sinner's hope—the finished atonement, the accepted sacrifice of the Son of God—is kept out of sight; in the one case by its being put behind the audacious mummary of a priestly oracle without; in the other, by the eye of the inquirer being directed away from it to the dim and dubious responses of an oracle within.

Thirdly. There does not seem to me to be any *essential* difference between the Anglo-catholic and evangelical views regarding either the *nature* of the salvation which flows to us through Christ, or the *relation* in which the effects produced in us stand to his work. By both parties it is maintained, that we are pardoned through the imputation to us of Christ's righteousness, and that we are at the same time sanctified through the impartation to us of Christ's Spirit and power,—the Spirit of holiness, and the power of in-dwelling Deity. On this head

the following quotations from Mr Newman will suffice to indicate the views entertained by his party:—

“Justification is ‘the glorious voice of the Lord’ declaring us to be righteous. That it is a declaration, not a making, is sufficiently clear from this one argument, that it is the justification of a *sinner*, of one who *has been* a sinner; and the past cannot be reversed except by *accounting* it reversed.” “Righteousness is the name, character, or estimation of righteousness vouchsafed to the past, and extending from the past to the present, as far as the present is affected by the past. It is the accounting a person not to have that present guilt, peril, odiousness, illrepute, with which the past burdens him.”¹ “Imputed righteousness is the coming in of actual righteousness. They whom God’s sovereign word pronounces just, forthwith become just.”² “The justifying word conveys the Spirit, and the Spirit makes our works ‘pleasing’ and ‘acceptable’ to God.”³

These quotations are sufficient to show, that by Mr Newman the same doctrines *substantially* are held concerning human salvation by Christ, which are taught by modern evangelical theologians.

I say *substantially*, for in Mr Newman’s statements there are *forms* of doctrine which few who borrow their opinions solely from scripture will be willing to adopt. Thus he pretends to inform us *how* it is that we are justified, by assuring us, that it is by the impartation to us of Christ’s indwelling presence. If by this he mean, that there is a mysterious communication to us of the personality of Christ, in virtue of which God forgives our past sins, and

¹ Lectures on Justification, pp. 71, 73.

² Ibid. p. 86.

³ Ibid. p. 99.

treats us as justified persons, he must be regarded as teaching a doctrine, not only unauthorised by scripture, but quite incompatible with his own admission that our past sins are forgiven on the ground of the imputation to us of the righteousness of Christ. I venture, however, to think, that this, like many other things advanced in his writings, is to be attributed to an unworthy affectation of mystical profundity, rather than to any really erroneous sentiments entertained by him on this subject.

He differs also from the majority of protestant writers in his mode of stating the *connection* between justification and sanctification. The former of these he regards as the *cause* of the latter; whilst with others it is usual to describe the two as collateral effects of distinct causes,—the one of God's free grace, the other of God's renovating power. The difference here, at first sight, appears great, and more than formal; yet I cannot help thinking, that both parties are substantially agreed. No protestant, I suppose, would refuse to admit, that justification is so far the cause of sanctification, that it is an indispensable means of producing it; in other words, that God does not sanctify *until* he has remitted sin, and that he remits sin *in order* that he may sanctify. There are many who will not hesitate to go farther than this, and maintain, that the grace experienced in justification leads *necessarily* to that grateful love which is the foundation of all

holy feeling and conduct in the Christian,—an opinion which seems fully authorised by our blessed Lord himself in his parable of the two debtors, in his application of that to the case of the woman to whom he had forgiven much because she loved much, and in the words with which he followed that application, “for to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.”¹ Now, with this view that of Mr Newman does not seem to me very far to disagree. In what sense he understands pardon to be the cause of renewal, may be gathered from his speaking of it as the primary privilege of a state which tends to sanctification, and of which everlasting life is the ultimate fruit,²—language which plainly intimates, that in his view pardon is no otherwise the cause of holiness, than as it is that without which the work of sanctification cannot be begun in the heart.

A more serious difficulty arises from Mr Newman’s assertion that he regards justification and sanctification as identical. This seems incompatible not only with the doctrine of evangelical divines, but with his own sentiments in the passages already referred to. The difference, however, is more in appearance than in substance. All that Mr Newman really contends for is, that the two parts of salvation, pardon and renewal, *are inseparable*—that the former is instru-

¹ Luke vii. 41, ff.

² Lectures on Justif., pp. 113, 146, &c.

mental to the latter—that, consequently, the designation proper to the former may, according to a very common usage, be employed to express the entire process,—and that, in point of fact, the word “righteousness” is so used by the sacred writers. That such are his views the following extracts from his Lectures will evince:—

“I say, then, if the direct result of justification be actual righteousness, it is not at all unnatural or strange that righteousness or renewal should be called our justification; (as little as saying, as we do without scruple, that a man has no ‘life’ in him when we mean no ‘activity’ or no ‘heat’—heat and activity being effects of life—or in using ‘animation,’ first for life and then for liveliness.”¹)

“The great benefit of justification, as all will allow, is this one thing—the transference of the soul from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Christ. We may, if we will, divide this event into parts, and say that it is *both* pardon *and* renovation, but such a division is merely mental, and does not affect the transit (so to speak) itself, which is but one act. . . . In justifying, God takes away what is past *by* bringing in what is new. He takes us out of the fire by lifting us up in his everlasting hands, and enwrapping us in his own glory.

“Such is justification; but is it not plain that in its beginning it will consist of scarcely anything but pardon? because all that we have hitherto done is sinful in its nature, and has to be pardoned, but to be renewed is a work of time; whereas, as time goes on, and we become more holy, it will consist more in renewal, if not less in pardon, and at least there is no original sin, as when it was first granted, to be forgiven.”²

Now, we may hold it unwise and erroneous thus to combine pardon and sanctification under the common appellation of justification; but it is unfair and untrue to represent Mr Newman and his party as so identifying legal and moral righteousness that they

¹ Lecture iv. p. 93.

² Ibid. pp. 112, 113.

make the latter the cause of the former, and it is not certainly, as he himself complains, "at all justifiable, after the fashion of the day, to set down such a mode of speech to spiritual blindness, and to stigmatize it as perilous to its maintainers." P. 93.

Fourthly. It is necessary to bear in mind, that the term "regeneration" is used in a somewhat different sense by the Oxford divines from that in which it is used by the evangelical party. By the latter it is distinguished from justification, or that change of *state* by which a man obtains a title to heaven, and is employed to denote that change of *character* by which a man becomes fit for the holy exercises and joys of heaven. By the former it is used as comprehending *both* of these. Thus, Dr Pusey says in his Tract on Baptism, p. 23,—

"One may define regeneration to be 'that act whereby God takes us out of our relation to Adam and makes us actual members of His Son, and so His sons, as being members of His Ever-blessed Son; and if sons, then heirs of God through Christ,' (Gal. iv. 7.) This is our new birth, an actual birth of God, of water and the Spirit, as we were actually born of our natural parents; *herein then also are we justified, or both accounted and made righteous*, since we are made members of Him who is Alone Righteous; freed from past sin, whether original or actual; have a new principle of life imparted to us," &c.

From this passage it is easy to gather that the writer's reasonings concerning regeneration will be greatly misunderstood and misrepresented if by that term he is to be regarded as designating *moral renovation* alone. Whether his usage of the term be correct and scriptural is another question, on which

I enter no farther than just to hint that it is worthy of being more carefully considered by evangelical theologians than, I fear, it for the most part has yet been.

These preliminary remarks, which I have felt called upon to make as an act of justice to the party whose opinions I am engaged in examining, will serve also to narrow and define the sphere of subsequent inquiry, by justifying the omission of all discussion relative to the foundation and nature of that salvation which the gospel of Jesus Christ announces to men. Passing by these points, the subjects remaining for consideration under this head respect the way in which the benefits of this salvation may be secured by individuals, and the consequences thence resulting to those who obtain them.

Under the former of these heads, to which in the present chapter we shall confine ourselves, the question to be considered may be briefly put thus:—How may a sinner obtain the pardon of his sins through the merits of Christ's sacrifice, and so enter upon the privileges of the family of God?

The general answer which Dr Pusey would give to this all-important question, may be gathered from the following passage from one of his writings:—

“To the unconverted the apostles set forth judgment to come, repentance from dead works, remission of sins through baptism, upon faith in Christ Jesus; then on conversion followed baptism, conveying remission of sins, uniting them with Christ, imparting to them the SPIRIT; and *then* those baptized they urge to use the power

thus imparted to them; to them they apply the gospel motives, *because* they had received the strength of the gospel: they bid them 'walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they had been called,' having first bid them 'in the name of JESUS CHRIST arise and walk.'"¹

The only part of this statement to which, I suppose, any evangelical divine would object, is that which ascribes such direct efficacy to the rite of baptism in the matter of salvation. All the rest seems correct and scriptural; though, when we come to examine what Dr Pusey would include under the duty of walking worthy of our Christian vocation, we shall find, I fear, not a little that partakes more of the superstitious discipline of a corrupted Christianity, than of the simplicity of apostolic precept. On this, however, which belongs to the discussion of the latter of the two questions above mentioned, I do not at present enter; reserving that as the topic of the next chapter, and confining myself in the mean time to the answer which the above extract furnishes to the former.

It is affirmed, then, by the Oxford divines, that man is saved by receiving "the remission of sins through baptism, upon faith in Christ Jesus." They regard faith as necessary no less than baptism; though they ascribe to baptism a direct operative efficacy, which cannot be ascribed, in their opinion, to faith, or to any mere act of the human mind.

¹ Tract on Baptism, p. 92.

Faith, according to Mr Newman, simply as it were, *asks* for the gift; whilst baptism actually *conveys* it;¹ or, as Dr Pusey states substantially the same distinction, "Baptism is the channel through which God bestows justification, and faith is the quality through which we receive it."² A mighty and mysterious efficacy is thus imputed to baptism, which cannot be better described than in the words of the writer last quoted.

"Our baptism," says he, "is of inexpressible value and comfort, even because it is the act of God; it has nothing earthly mingled with it; it was simply His who chose us according to His eternal purpose, 'to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,' and 'predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself,' making us in the Beloved his own sons, members of his Christ, heirs of the kingdom of heaven."³

Such statements necessitate an inquiry into the saving efficacy thus imputed to ritual baptism. When this is finished, we shall be the better prepared to state what seems the scripture doctrine concerning the way of the sinner's acceptance with God, as well as concerning the connection between baptism and regeneration.

In entering upon the question of baptismal efficacy, I have no intention of occupying the ground of those of whom Dr Pusey complains, that though the catholics distinctly place their doctrine of baptismal efficacy on the footing of a mystery, they urge against it the objection, that it is incomprehen-

¹ Tract No. 90, p. 13.

² Tract on Baptism, p. 87.

³ Ibid. p. 89.

sible and impossible. In such a case, an objection of this nature is obviously inadmissible. Whenever a doctrine is avowed to be a mystery, the sole question concerning it becomes one of external evidence. To allege against it that it is incomprehensible, is simply to affirm, in other terms, the proposition in which, by its advocates, it has been already announced. To object to it, that it is impossible, is (unless we can show that it involves a contradiction in terms) to set limits to the Divine power, and to presume to determine what may, and what may not, be in any department of God's operation.

At the same time, if this doctrine be put forth under the character of a mystery, it becomes, on that account, the more necessary that it should be *clearly and unequivocally proved*. When a demand of this sort is made on our faith, it is but reasonable that evidence of the most convincing character should be submitted to us before we are required to admit the avowedly inexplicable fact.

There is another reason why the assertion of this doctrine should be made to rest upon very distinct and unquestionable evidence; and that is, that it is a doctrine which, if scriptural, is altogether peculiar, and not only peculiar, but, in appearance at least, somewhat alien from the other parts of the Christian system as made known to us in the New Testament. Among all the ritual institutions of which notice is taken in scripture, this and the Lord's supper (if we

adopt the catholic view of these rites) would seem to be the only two to which a direct operative efficacy can be ascribed. Under the ancient economy, the ritual observances were exceedingly numerous and imposing; but they were all mere *symbols*,—mere sensible representations of spiritual truths, which operated on the worshipper only through the medium of the lessons they conveyed, or the facts they commemorated.¹ Under the New Testament economy, this system of ritual teaching has been, in a great measure, laid aside; and the reason assigned by the apostles themselves for this is, that the substance, of which these ancient rites were but the shadow, is now the inheritance of the sons of God. In accordance with this, the prevailing character of the Christian system is *spiritual*. It is a scheme for effecting a spiritual result, by means of truth received into the understanding, and operating on the will of man. Hence, if in connection with it ritual observances are retained, it is natural to expect that they should not be of a nature *more* outward and carnal (to say the least) than the rites of the ancient economy. As every other part of the Christian system involves the principle, that the desired result is to be obtained by the application of truth to the mind,

¹ See Outram de Sacrificiis, lib. i. cap. 21, 22; Magee on Atonement and Sacrifice, Disc. ii., &c.; Pye Smith on the Sacrifice and Priesthood of Christ, Disc. i.; Bähr's Symbolik des Mosaischen Cultus, bd. i. s. 23 ff., und s. 46 ff.; and the Author's Connection and Harmony of the Old and New Testaments, p. 383 ff.

we should expect to find in these rites, as in those of the former dispensation, only a peculiar mode of teaching the truths to which they relate. In this presumption we may be mistaken. It is possible, that in this one instance there may be a provision in Christianity for effecting a saving result rather by something done to or upon the individual, than by any instruction received by him. But if so, the provision is a *singular* one; it has no parallel in any other of the divine institutions; it wears a foreign aspect by the side of the other parts of the Christian system. Under these circumstances, are we not entitled to demand, that before it be admitted, its truth shall be demonstrated by an irrefragable body of scriptural evidence?

To the furnishing of such evidence, Dr Pusey has devoted a very long and elaborate treatise, from which quotations have already been made in this chapter. In this he enlarges principally upon certain passages, in which the connection between baptism and salvation is very strongly affirmed; such as, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved. We are buried with Christ by baptism into death, [*i. e.* death to sin, comp. ver. 2.] As many of you as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ. Ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands in [by] putting off the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, [*Christian circumcision*, when ye were] buried with him in

baptism. The like figure, whereunto baptism also now saveth us,"¹ &c. Now I am free to admit, that with these passages before us, it is impossible to deny that baptism of some sort is connected with salvation. At the same time, there may be a question raised, whether the baptism spoken of, in *all* these passages, be nothing more than mere water-baptism. In illustration of this, I have to submit to the reader the following remarks:—

1. The word (βαπτίζω) *baptise*, as used by the sacred writers, does not necessarily imply *the application of water to the person*. That word does not mean, as we are by some very confidently told, either to *immerse*, or to *pour*, or to *sprinkle*. As used in the New Testament, it denotes to *cleanse*, to *purify* generally, in whatever way, and by whatever means that may be effected.² Thus it is used of purification by fire: "I indeed," said John the Baptist, "baptise you with water; but he that cometh after me . . . shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire,"—a passage in which the allusion is obviously to the prediction concerning the Messiah, that he should be "as a refiner's fire, and a fuller's soap; and should sit as a refiner

¹ Mark xvi. 16; Rom. vi. 4; Gal. iii. 17; Coloss. ii. 11; 1 Peter iii. 21.

² See this very fully proved in an able series of articles in the *American Biblical Repository* for January and April 1840, and January and July 1841, from the pen of the Rev. E. Beecher, President of Illinois College; also in a valuable series by an anonymous writer in the *London Congregational Magazine* for 1841.

and purifier of silver.”¹ Thus also it is used of the Jewish ritual purifications, as when our Lord speaks of “the baptising of the hands” after returning from market, and “the baptism of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and tables,” appointed by the tradition of the elders;² and as when the apostle speaks of “the diverse baptisms” (διαφόροις βαπτισμοῖς) which formed a part of the ancient dispensation.³ With the same general meaning is the word used by our Lord when he said to James and John, “Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?”⁴—words which can only, I think, refer to the purifying trials through which Christ, as the sacrifice of the world, was to pass, and through which his apostles should also pass in filling up, as one of them expresses it, “that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ in their flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church.”⁵ As corroborative of the conclusion to which the usage of the word in these passages leads, it may be observed, that the words “baptise” and “baptism,” are used interchangeably and synonymously with the words “purify” and “purification.” Thus the controversy which, at an early period of our Lord’s public ministry, arose between his disciples and those of John, concerning the baptisms of their respective masters,

¹ Matt. iii. 11; Mal. iii. 2.

² Mark vii. 4, 8.

³ Heb. ix. 10.

⁴ Mark x. 38.

⁵ Col. i. 24.

is called by the evangelist "a question concerning purifying."¹ In like manner the New Testament writers speak of the work of the Spirit on the mind, in some cases as a *purifying* or *sanctifying* of the mind, and in others as a *baptism*, and of men being *cleansed* from sin, and *baptised* for the remission of sins.² Such phraseology leads naturally to the conclusion, that the leading, primary idea attached by the New Testament writers to the word baptise, was that of purifying or cleansing, without any necessary reference to the nature of the purification, or to the means by which it was effected.

Now, if this be the case, it is obvious, that from the mere use, in any given instance, of the word "baptise," or its cognates, we cannot justly infer, that it is of *a rite* performed upon the person that the word is employed. Did the word never designate any thing but the rite, such an inference would not only be legitimate, but necessary. But when we see that it is not confined to this usage, but is used in a sense so general as to be applicable to all kinds and modes of purifications, it is only from the context, or some other extrinsic source, that its meaning in any given case can be determined. To assume, then, that whatever the sacred writer affirms of baptism, is necessarily affirmed of *water*

¹ John iii. 25.

² Comp. 2 Thes. ii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 2, 22; Acts i. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 13; 1 John i. 7; Acts ii. 38, &c.

baptism, is to assume what ought to be proved. Apart from proof, it may be of fire-baptism, or of baptism by suffering, or of the baptism of the Spirit, or of mere bodily cleansing, or of mental purifications, that the writer is discoursing; and if we wish to fix the meaning of his words to any one of these, we must show cause from the context or otherwise why it should be so fixed.

2. We are very emphatically told, that the grand distinction between the baptism of John and the baptism of Christ lay in this, that the former was by water, whilst the latter is by the Spirit. How strongly was this affirmed by John himself to those who waited on his instructions! Again and again he exclaimed to them, "I have baptised you with water; but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit."¹ And on one occasion he told them, that he had received the knowledge of this by a solemn intimation from heaven:—"He who sent me to baptise with water, even he said to me: On whom thou seest the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Spirit."² In accordance with this, our Saviour himself said to his disciples before his ascension: "John truly baptised with water; but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit."³ And at a subsequent period Peter states, that this declaration was recalled to his

¹ Matt. iii. 11, &c.

² John i. 33.

³ Acts i. 5.

recollection when, as he was speaking to Cornelius and his household, "the Holy Spirit fell upon them as upon the disciples at the beginning,"—a statement which is farther explained in the same context as equivalent to God's having "to the Gentiles also granted repentance unto life."¹ These passages place before us, in clear and distinct language, the fact, not only that there may be water-baptism where there is not the baptism of the Spirit; but that the baptism peculiarly characteristic of Christianity, is the latter, and not the former. It does not certainly follow from this, as some have rashly concluded, that baptism with water is no part of the religion of Christ; but from such statements we surely cannot do less than infer, 1. That where in the New Testament baptism is spoken of *absolutely*, the presumption is, that it is to the baptism of the Spirit that reference is made; and, 2. That the place occupied by water-baptism in the Christian system, is one of a merely subordinate character; in other words, that the rite derives its worth not from any thing in itself, but solely from its relation as a sign or symbol to that spiritual baptism,—that "repentance unto life" which it is the grand design of Christianity to confer.

If these remarks be just, we have supplied by them an important guide in our attempts to esti-

¹ Acts xi. 15, 18.

mate the degree of support which the Anglo-catholic doctrine of baptismal salvation derives from those passages in the New Testament which are adduced by its advocates. The *presumption* is, that these passages do not refer to the rite simply as a rite, even in those cases where a reference to water-baptism may be admitted to be involved in the general statement; so that before any one of them can be concluded to favour this doctrine, it must be *proved* against this presumption, that it is ritual baptism *per se* that is spoken of, and that nothing but ritual baptism can be intended by the writer in the passage under discussion. If these two points cannot be established, the passage obviously fails the cause it is adduced to support; whilst, on the other hand, if it can be shown, that in that passage it is *real*, and not merely *ritual* baptism or purification that is designed, the whole weight of the passage passes into the opposing scale.

Let us now take a brief survey of the passages on which Dr Pusey has laid the chief stress, as favouring his views; following the order in which he himself has adduced them.

The first that he urges is John iii. 5—"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." By "water" in this passage, he understands our Lord to mean baptismal water; and in this light he quotes our Lord's words, as containing a decided declaration as to the

regenerating power of baptism. On this I observe, 1st, That even admitting the catholic interpretation of this passage, I do not see that it will greatly serve the object for which it is adduced. The point to be proved is, that outward baptism has power to regenerate those to whom it is applied; that is, that a properly qualified person has only to administer the baptismal waters in order directly, *ipso facto*, to regenerate the party receiving the rite. Now, where is the countenance given to this doctrine in the passage before us? Our Lord does not say that water, by itself, without the Spirit, will regenerate; nor does he intimate that the application of water to the person *secures* the agency of the Spirit on the mind. He simply affirms that both water and the Spirit (supposing them different) are necessary to regeneration. Now, one might logically enough infer from this, that, on the catholic explanation of the word water, baptism is *essential* to salvation; but to infer from it that baptism will of itself save is clearly illegitimate. If I were to say—"Except a man understand and believe the gospel he cannot be saved," it would be a just inference from my words, that the understanding of the gospel is essential to salvation; but if any were to explain my statement as affirming that a *mere* understanding of the gospel was enough to save a man, I should justly complain that my meaning had been perverted. I conceive the case before us to be quite analogous. If by "water," our

Lord, in this passage, mean baptism, he certainly teaches that, without that rite, there is no regeneration, but he does *not* teach that that rite has, in itself, the power of regeneration. *2dly*, It may be questioned whether our Lord, in using the word "water" on this occasion intended any allusion whatever to baptism. Let it be remembered that, at the time he spoke thus, the commission to his disciples to baptise men into the name of the Trinity had not been given, and that the person for whose instruction he was speaking was a Jew, to whom the meaning of such an allusion, couched in such terms, would be hardly perceptible. There was another meaning, however, which, to the mind of one who was "a master in Israel," would naturally occur. In the ancient scriptures, the cleansing of the soul from pollution is not rarely spoken of under the figure of water applied to the person. "I entered into a covenant with thee," says God to the Jewish church, "and thou becamest mine; then washed I thee with water." "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you," says he again, with reference to the times of the Messiah, "and ye shall be clean, from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my Spirit within you," &c. "In that day," says he again, speaking of the same

period, "there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." With these and similar passages there can be no doubt but that Nicodemus was well acquainted; and this being the case, it seems almost inconceivable that our Lord's words, literally identical as they are with the expressions used in the second of the above quotations, should have led away the mind of the ruler from the ideas of *internal purification*, which, in connection with these passages, they suggest, to a mere outward rite, and one which, in its proper character, as a Christian institute, did not, at the time they were uttered, exist. Surely, if in this solemn declaration, our Lord meant to teach the necessity of baptism to salvation, he would have condescended to use towards one whom he showed such a gracious desire to instruct, language of a nature less likely to mislead his hearer. *3dly*, It is worthy of remark, that, in what follows in our Lord's discourse, it is only of the *birth by the Spirit* that He speaks; this he repeatedly mentions, while no further allusion is made by Him to a birth by water. Now, this seems greatly to favour the opinion, that, in this 5th verse, he makes use of a hendiadys, and that, by "water and the Spirit," he only means the Spirit which cleanses like water, the purifying or cleansing Spirit. This figure is of frequent occurrence in the New Testament, and one example of it is so exactly parallel to the words

before us, as almost to *require* for them the interpretation just given. I allude to the words of John the Baptist concerning Christ; "He shall baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire," words which can bear no other meaning than that the baptism of the Spirit should purify like fire. Why should not the same principle of interpretation be resorted to in the case before us? If a hendiadys be admitted in the one case, why not in the other? Are not the two exactly parallel? *In fine*, it may be observed, that Dr Pusey cannot object to the *principle* of this interpretation, for his own, if I do not misapprehend his meaning, proceeds upon the supposition of a hendiadys in this passage. He understands the passage as if it read—"Except a man be born of water, operating with the power of the Spirit," &c. The only question, then, between him and us is, whether the water qualifies the Spirit, or the Spirit qualifies the water; in other words, whether our Saviour, to explain the mysterious agency of water, compared it to the Divine Spirit; or, to explain the operation of the Spirit, compared it to water. Between these two there cannot surely be much hesitation in our choice, when we remember that with all correct speakers it is usual to illustrate spiritual objects by material, not material objects by spiritual.

Following Dr Pusey's guidance, the next passage that comes under consideration is our Lord's commission to his apostles immediately before his ascen-

sion. This, as given by the evangelists Matthew and Mark, runs thus:—"Having gone into all the world preach the gospel to every creature; make disciples of all the nations, [by] baptising them into (or for, *eis*) the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, instructing them to keep whatsoever things I have enjoined on you. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned. And lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen."¹ From these words it appears that our Lord commissioned his apostles to make men disciples by two means—by baptising them, and by teaching them; and that consequently men are to become disciples by the correspondent acts of being baptised and believing what they are taught. We also learn from them that both belief and baptism are required for salvation; but there is certainly no intimation in the whole commission to the effect that baptism of *itself* will save,² still less that faith without baptism will not save. The main stress is evidently laid on the believing, which leads to the conclusion that baptism is here said to be essential to salvation only in the same sense in which a public profession of attach-

¹ Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 15, 16.

² Strange to say, Dr Pusey himself admits this in his comment on this passage. "Baptism without faith undoubtedly would save none." Is it only, then, when it accompanies faith that it is efficacious? If so, how comes it to be efficacious to infants?

ment to Christ is elsewhere said to be essential,¹ viz., as an outward index or symbol of the faith within which it stands associated. I understand our Lord's words, then, as virtually meaning that every one who believes and duly professes that belief, shall be saved. That such was the interpretation put upon them by the apostles themselves may be inferred, I think, with considerable certainty from their subsequent practice, in the history of which we find no trace of their attempting to baptise any but such as they had previously taught. It is worthy of remark also, that Paul, speaking of his apostolic commission, says, "Christ sent me not to baptise, but to preach the gospel;"² language which by no means intimates that the apostle considered the administration of baptism as no part of his duty, but which very clearly teaches that he regarded it as altogether subordinate to the great work of announcing to men the message of salvation through Christ.

Against this view of the apostolic commission, Dr Pusey urges that it is incompatible with the due interpretation of the phrase "baptising them into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit." These words, he contends, are full of very deep and mysterious meaning. They imply, he tells us, "no mere profession of obedience, sovereignty,

¹ Rom. x. 9; Luke xii. 8, &c.

² 1 Cor. i. 17.

belief, but (if one may so speak) a real appropriation of the person baptised to the Holy Trinity, a transfer of him from the dominion of Satan to Them; an insertion of him within their blessed Name; and a casting the shield (to speak humanly) of that *Almighty* Name over him,"¹ &c. This language is not very intelligible; but I suppose the author means by it that baptism into the name of the Trinity means an actual and not a mere professed submission to God, and embracing of the gracious benefits which he is pleased to bestow. Now, that wherever there is such a profession, it *ought* to be accompanied with the reality there can be no doubt, but that the phrase "to baptise into the name of God" implies anything more than to introduce by means of baptism to the *profession* of God's service and worship, will not easily admit of proof. Happily for the due understanding of such phraseology, it is not only of the Divine Being that it is employed in scripture. Paul asks the Corinthians, "Were ye baptised into the name of Paul?" and again, in the same epistle he says of the Israelites, that "they were all baptised into Moses by (ἐν) the cloud and by the sea."² In both these passages the phrase in question can imply nothing else than *external* profession; in the case of the Corinthians of submission to Paul, in the case of the Israelites of submission to Moses. Upon what grounds, then, can it be argued that it has a

¹ Tract, pp. 72, 73.

² 1 Cor. i. 13; x. 2.

different meaning in our Lord's commission to his apostles?

The only other passages adduced by Dr Pusey as proving by their *direct* testimony the efficacy of outward baptism, are Tit. iii. 5, and 1 Pet. iii. 21. In the former of these, God is said to save us "according to his mercy by the washing of regeneration and of renewing of the Holy Spirit." Such is the rendering of the passage which Dr Pusey himself gives, and which will, I think, be admitted on all hands to be correct. Now, what is the idea intended to be conveyed to us by such a peculiar combination of words as this? All these genitives depend from the word *λουτροῦ*, rendered "washing," and consequently are all explanatory of it. The washing here spoken of is the washing *of* regeneration, and *of* renewing *of* the Holy Spirit. Can this mean anything else than the regenerating and renewing washing of the Holy Spirit? in other words, the moral cleansing which the Spirit effects on the mind? If so, this passage says nothing about outward baptism (except it *may* be in the way of dim and indistinct allusion), while what it does say, so far from favouring the notion of baptismal efficacy, leads rather to the conclusion, that as it is not by any works of ours (and ritual baptism is surely a human work) but by the direct agency of the Divine Spirit that we are regenerated and renewed, it is to the latter and not to the former we should look as alone efficacious in our salvation.

As respects the statement by the apostle Peter, that baptism, as an antitype to the flood, now saves us, whatever difficulties may, in other respects, attach to the passage, there can be none in determining of what sort the baptism is of which the apostle speaks; for he himself expressly tells us, that it is not outward, but moral purification to which he refers; "not," he says, "the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God." Here again, then, there is nothing about water-baptism, except it may be in the way of distant allusion; the saving power being ascribed solely to the moral cleansing which is effected by the Divine Spirit. And with this accords fully the context of the passage, which, indeed, only on this view receives, as it appears to me, any consistent interpretation. In the preceding verse, Peter, speaking of the flood in the days of Noah, says that the salvation of the patriarch and his family by water was a type of the salvation of Christians by baptism. In this comparison the water of the flood answers to the baptism of which the apostle speaks, as type to antitype. But what is the relation of type to antitype? Is it that of one material object or act to another? or is it not that of a material object or act to something spiritual and invisible? If we are to be guided by the case of the Mosaic types, the latter is the decision to

which we must come. The entire system of Mosaic types was composed of outward symbols of unseen and invisible things; and the correspondence between them and the system of Christianity is not that of act to act, or person to person, but of acts, persons, offices, times, and places, to the great spiritual truths which Christianity unfolds.¹ When, therefore, Peter says here that baptism is the antitype to the water of the flood, the analogy of typical interpretation leads us to infer, that it is not the material baptism—the baptism with water—that is spoken of, (for this would be to make water the type of water,) but spiritual baptism, real cleansing, or, as the apostle himself expresses it, “the answer of a good conscience toward God.” In this point of view, the comparison which he institutes admits of easy explanation; for as Noah and his sons were saved from temporal death by those waters which purged away the impurity of the old world, so are Christians saved by those purifying influences which are bestowed upon them “through the resurrection of Christ.” By this last expression, used by the apostle in the close of the verse, the view above taken of the whole is confirmed, for it directs our thoughts to that great event in connection with which the apos-

¹ For an illustration of this, the author begs to refer to his Lectures on the Connection and Harmony of the Old and New Testaments. Lect. viii. p. 383.

bles represent our Saviour as having received the promise of the Spirit whereby he shed forth blessings on his church.

From those passages in which, according to his view, baptismal efficacy is taught directly, Dr Pusey passes to such evidences of the same doctrine as he thinks may be drawn from the *practice* of the apostles as recorded in the Acts. And first he calls our attention to Peter's exhortation to the Jews on the day of Pentecost,—“Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”¹ The consideration of this passage need not detain us very long. The whole weight of it as an argument on Dr Pusey's side, rests on the assumption, that it was by baptism that Peter told his hearers they were to obtain the remission of their sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost. In making this assumption, however, it is forgotten that Peter says “Repent,” as well as “be baptised;” and that it is as consequent upon this change of mind, as well as of profession, that the gift of the Spirit was to be enjoyed. Had Peter said simply, “Be baptised and ye shall receive the Holy Spirit,” or, “Be baptised that ye may repent,” or, “By baptism your sins shall be forgiven,” the case would have been one clearly in Dr Pusey's favour. But

¹ Acts ii. 38.

as the passage stands, it shows, that repentance was to precede baptism, and that repentance followed by baptism into the name of Christ was the divinely appointed way of obtaining the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. If it be said that this still proves the necessity of baptism to salvation, though it does not prove that baptism can of itself save, I reply, that even this does not necessarily follow from the passage. Is it not quite possible for two things to go to the orderly completion of an act of which only one, nevertheless, shall be *essential* to that act? May not one maintain, for instance, that the minister of a Christian church should be both called and ordained to the office which he holds, and yet regard it as by no means fatal to the valid exercise of the functions of that office by any individual that in his case ordination had been omitted? May not one say, that by receiving and avowing Christianity a man is saved, and yet not be understood by any person as meaning that the *avowal* of the man's faith is as essential to his salvation as the faith itself? And may we not, therefore, justly regard the apostle here as teaching, that a change of mind, accompanied by a submission to the rite of baptism, in other words, by a solemn profession, in a peculiar and appointed manner, of that faith by which the change has been effected, is the way for men to obtain the remission of their sins, without necessarily meaning to affirm, that the

latter is essential in the same sense as the former? What seems clearly to show that such is the correct view of Peter's words is, that in a subsequent address to the same class of people, he omitted all reference to baptism, and merely exhorted them to "repent and be converted, that their sins might be blotted out."¹ If baptism be essential to the remission of sins, it is quite plain, that in this latter instance Peter came short of his duty, and failed to set before his hearers "the whole counsel of God."

We come now to the case of the apostle Paul, of whose baptism we have an account in Acts xxii. 16, where he himself tells us that Ananias addressed him thus: "And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." This language is adduced, by the advocates of baptismal salvation, as showing that it was by baptism that Paul was exhorted to wash away his sins, and the inference they would draw from this is, that it is by the same means that sins are to be washed away in every case. Now, respecting the justice of this inference there can be no dispute, supposing the premises on which it is based to be established. But, before this is conceded, let the following things be duly pondered. In the *first* place, from all that we know of Paul's history at this time, he must be regarded as really

¹ Acts iii. 19.

a Christian before Ananias was sent to him. He had seen Jesus by the way, he had been humbled and softened by the sight, he had spent the three days following in deep and anxious meditation, he had received a special message of encouragement from God, and God himself assured Ananias of his real conversion, by the declaration "Behold he prayeth," an assurance which Ananias seems fully to have understood in this sense, for immediately on approaching Paul he addresses him by the term by which the Christians were wont to address each other, "Brother."¹ Whatever effect, then, baptism was intended to produce on the apostle, it could not be designed to produce in him conversion, or to convey to him the Divine favour, as of these we have accredited proof that he was already possessed. 2. The words, "thy sins," are assumed by the catholics to refer to the whole of Paul's previous offences against the divine law. But may it not, with justice, be doubted whether this be a correct interpretation of these words? Paul had, before his conversion to Christianity, been a pious Jew, and doubtless had both sought and found forgiveness of his sins, through the same channel by which, to the saints before Christ's appearance, that blessing had flowed. In this case his conversion can hardly be regarded in any other light than that in which those of the "devout men,"

¹ Compare Acts ix. 10 ff; and xxii. 16 ff.

on the day of Pentecost, of Lydia, and of other pious Jews must be regarded—not as a change from ungodliness to piety, so much as a change from the prejudices and imperfect illumination of Judaism to the full light and truth of Christianity. But Paul though a devout Jew had committed great offences by his ignorant and mistaken zeal against Christ. He had been “a blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious,” and had brought by this a grievous stigma upon his character in the estimation of the Christians. To remove this was desirable, as well as to obtain the forgiveness of his sins from God; and it is to the former, perhaps, rather than to the latter, that the words of Ananias here refer. 3. What seems to confirm this is, that Ananias adds a specification of the way in which this is to be done;—“wash away thy sins (by) calling upon the name of the Lord.” The participle here has plainly the gerundial force which the Greek participle often has, especially after the imperative of active verbs,¹ and specifies the way in which the action of the verb with which it is joined is to take effect. From this it appears that it was not by being baptised that Paul was to wash away his sins, but by calling upon the name of the Lord. What this implied we see at once by referring to Acts ix. 21, and 1 Cor. i. 2, where this phrase is plainly used as equivalent with

¹ Matthiæ Gr. Gr., § 566. Eng. tr. Kühner, Ausführliche Grammatik, § 668.

being an avowed disciple of Christ. The purport of the exhortation of Ananias, then, to Paul, I take to be that he should no longer delay, but having already found mercy and obtained the forgiveness of his sins through the merits of Christ, that he should arise, and by the open avowal of his change and of his attachment to Christ, wash away those stains which his conduct as a persecutor had brought upon his reputation. If this view be rejected, and if it be thought that the sins spoken off by Ananias were the whole of Paul's transgressions against the Divine law up to this period, still it will not follow that it was by baptism that these were to be remitted, for, in the first place, as the passage stands, the exhortation to wash away his sins is parallel to the two other exhortations, to arise and to be baptised, so that, for aught that appears to the contrary, one might as well say that Paul was to be baptised by arising, as that he was to wash away his sins by being baptised; and secondly, as already noticed, Ananias distinctly specifies "the calling upon the name of the Lord" as the medium of washing away his sins, which precludes the supposition that it was by baptism that this was to be done.

To the other cases to which Dr Pusey calls attention, as recorded in the Acts, it is unnecessary that I should proceed, as they prove nothing more, even on his own showing, than that the apostles attached so much importance to the rite of baptism, that they

were careful to administer it in all cases of conversion. This, of course, proves nothing as to the *design* which they expected the ordinance to accomplish.

Having now gone over the passages on which the advocates of baptismal salvation lay the chief stress, I am unwilling to occupy space by entering at large upon any of those which are regarded by them rather as implying than as directly teaching this doctrine. I cannot, however, altogether pass over those passages in which, as already remarked, a connection is intimated as existing between baptism of some sort and the personal enjoyment by believers of the benefits of Christ's work. Of these the chief are Rom. vi. 1—4; Gal. iii. 27; Col. ii. 11. After the most anxious consideration I have been able to give these portions of the word of God, I cannot come to any other conclusion than that they affirm the baptism to which they refer to be the medium whereby men become partakers of the benefits of Christ's work. When the apostle says that it is "through the baptism unto death" that we have been buried with Christ, (Rom. vi. 4,) what can he mean but that this baptism unto death is the medium through which Christians are buried with Christ? When, again, he says, "as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ," (Gal. iii. 27,) it seems quite plain that he affirms baptism into Christ to be the way in which these Galatians had put on Christ.

And when he tells the Colossians that it is by baptism they have been buried with Christ, and by baptism that they have been raised through belief of the energy of God who raised Christ from the dead, I must despair of understanding any part of Scripture, if by these words we are not taught that the baptism of which the apostle speaks is the medium through which we become partakers of the burial and resurrection of Christ.¹

This much, therefore, whatever it may cost, I feel myself bound to concede to the advocates of baptismal salvation. Why, then, do I not adopt that doctrine? Simply because I believe that it is not of ritual but of real baptism that Paul is in all these cases speaking.

In the context of Rom. vi. 4, the apostle is speak-

- I am aware that in adopting this view I depart from the ordinary interpretation of these passages. Almost all the writers on baptism, as well as the commentators, regard the baptism of which the apostle speaks as water-baptism. What seems to me fatal to this view is, that it makes the apostle, especially in the passage in Romans, rest the proof of a Christian doctrine on the mere profession of that doctrine by Christians. His position is, that the believer is dead to sin: his proof is, that the believer has been baptised into Christ's death. Now, if baptism into Christ's death mean a mere ritual profession of faith in Christ's death, as it is commonly interpreted, we have the apostle, as I say, resting the proof of a Christian doctrine on the mere act of a Christian man in professing that doctrine. This surely is to make Paul guilty of very unsound logic; whereas, if we understand by baptism here the baptism of the Spirit, *i. e.*, real regeneration, his argument becomes sound and convincing. Christians are then shown to be dead to sin because they have been renewed by the power of divine grace. See American Biblical Repository for July 1841, p. 28, ff.

ing of the renovated condition of the Christian as delivered from the power of sin. This he describes by instituting a parallel between the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord viewed as actual events, and the death, burial, and resurrection of the believer figuratively, as realised in his emancipation from the power of sin; a mode of representing this fact by no means uncommon with Paul, (comp. Eph. i. 19—23; Phil. iii. 10—21, &c.) Now, respecting the believer's death and burial to sin, these are attained, the apostle tells us, "through the baptism into the death," because he contends that all "who have been baptised into Christ have been baptised into his death;" *i.e.*, as he explains it in ver. 5, into "the similitude (ὁμοίωματι, something analogous to or comparable with, see chap. v. 14,) his death." What, then, is this baptism through which the believer dies a death analogous to that of his Lord? Is it an external rite, or is it a spiritual change? Dr Pusey concludes for the former, but without offering any proof in support of his conclusion. Now, it must, I think, be admitted that it is upon his side that the *onus probandi* in such a case as this lies; for the presumption is surely *against* the probability of a spiritual change so great as that of death to sin being brought about by a mere external act, the more especially as it is admitted by Dr Pusey himself that the power of sin remains so strongly even after baptism, that a man though baptised may nevertheless be lost. Could

he, indeed, succeed in proving by *other* passages that water-baptism is God's appointed medium of conveying regeneration, his explanation of this passage would be unimpeachable; but in the absence of such proof he cannot fairly adduce it as an *independent* evidence in support of his position. The same train of remark substantially is applicable to the other two passages above mentioned. In Gal. iii. 27, the apostle says, that "As many as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ." To "put on Christ" is obviously to become in disposition, character, and conduct like Christ, (comp. Rom. xiii. 14; Eph. iv. 24;) and the question just returns, Is it by an outward rite, or by an inward influence, that a sinful man is brought into a state of moral resemblance to the sinless Saviour? If it be replied, that it is by the outward act securing the inward power, I ask where is the proof that any such connexion subsists between the two? If, on the other hand, it be said that it is by the inward influence symbolised by the outward act, I answer, this may be very true, but how is it got out of this passage? Paul says plainly that it is "by being baptised into Christ" that men "put on Christ." The baptism here referred to may be the Spirit's baptism, or it may be mere water-baptism; our choice lies between these two; but I cannot see on what principle we can be entitled to combine both until we have proved *that both always go together*. In regard to the passage in

Col. ii. 12, the opinion, that it is spiritual baptism of which Paul speaks, is greatly strengthened by his expressly describing it as “a circumcision not made with hands in putting off the sins of the flesh,” words which can only apply to what he elsewhere calls “the circumcision of the heart in spirit and not in letter”¹—the real, genuine renewal of the heart in the sight of God, and not the mere formal profession of renovation.

I trust I have now satisfied my readers that there is no satisfactory ground for regarding the water of baptism as possessed of a saving efficacy; but that, wherever baptism is spoken of in connection with salvation, it is either to the baptism of the Spirit, or to that avowal of attachment to Christ, which is required of all his followers, and which baptism, as being the commencement of it, is employed to designate, that the reference is made. It would, indeed, have been strange had the apostles taught the doctrine which the catholic church holds on this head. They would thus have made Christianity a more carnal system than Judaism, for they would, while teaching that “circumcision is not of the flesh but of the heart,” and that “he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, but he who is one inwardly,” have taught that a rite, as purely external as circumcision, is sufficient to *make* a man a Christian, and that he

¹ Rom. ii. 29.

who is thus a Christian outwardly, is *ipso facto* a Christian inwardly and in heart. By such teaching also, they would have given occasion for questioning their own Christianity; for who can show that any of the apostles, except Paul, ever received Christian baptism with water? The probability is, that they were not baptised save by Christ's breathing on them the Holy Ghost, *after* which, it is to be remembered, he instituted Christian baptism as a rite to be administered by them; so that if it be water baptism which saves men, by what, I ask, were the apostles saved? They have also recorded the cases of Paul, of Lydia, of the jailor at Philippi, and of others, all of whom appear to have been truly converted persons before they were baptised; as well as the case of Simon Magus, who, though baptised, remained "in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity." In addition to all this, how striking is the language of Paul in regard to his own practice in the baptism of converts! "I thank God," says he, in writing to the Corinthians, "that I baptised none of you but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptised in my own name. And I baptised also the household of Stephanas; besides I know not whether I baptised any other. For Christ sent me not to baptise, but to preach the gospel."¹ Is this, I ask, the language of one who believed that

¹ 1 Cor. i. 14—17.

it was by baptism that men were to be united to Christ, and to receive through him the remission of sins? Can we suppose for a moment, that had the apostle really believed that doctrine, he would have refrained from administering baptism—that is, would have refused to convey to men salvation, lest some evil-minded persons should make a sinister use of his doing so? that he would have thanked God that he had only baptised two persons during his long residence at Corinth? that he would have affirmed that, commissioned as he was to teach men *all* that Christ had enjoined, he had been sent not to baptise, but to preach the gospel? and that he would have thought so little about the matter as really to be at a loss to remember how many he had baptised in the church at Corinth? What a contrast is there in this respect between Paul and the clergy of the catholic church! While they make baptism every thing, and the preaching of the gospel next to nothing, he elevates the preaching of the gospel to the first place, and allows to baptism only a very subordinate rank among the means of grace. While they think themselves successful as ministers of Christ in proportion to the number of persons they baptise, he thanks God that, in a large city, and out of a large church, he had only baptised one or two. And whilst they claim “religious veneration” from their flock on the ground of the mysterious virtue they are supposed to convey in baptism, he abstain-

ed from administering the rite altogether, except in a few instances, lest he should seem to be seeking honour for himself. Would that all who call themselves Paul's successors had the same high views of the spiritual nature of Christianity, and the power of the preaching of the gospel which dwelt in him!

Failing to substantiate their doctrine of salvation by baptism, the catholics leave the great question of a sinner's salvation unanswered. Man, as a transgressor of the Divine law, stands guilty before his Almighty Judge; from that guilt the waters of baptism cannot purge him: how, then, is he to escape the wrath to come? To this all-important inquiry the Bible enables us to give a clear and definite reply, the substance of which it may be useful now to state briefly in a few sentences.

1. First, then, as already noticed, the sole meritorious ground of a sinner's salvation is found in the propitiatory sacrifice of the Son of God. By that God manifests himself to us as "a just God and a Saviour," upholding, on the one hand, the majesty of his government and the authority of his law; and on the other, extending favour and blessing even to the chief of sinners.

2. The atonement of Christ being of unlimited sufficiency, is set forth in Scripture as a ground on which all may stand and receive blessing at the hand of God. Hence the offer is made to all men of

salvation through the blood of the cross. "The Spirit and the bride say come, and whosoever will let him come and take of the waters of life freely."¹

3. This gracious truth is embodied in a testimony contained in Scripture, and called there "God's testimony concerning his Son."² Hence before any man can or will accept the offer of salvation through Christ, he must believe the testimony in which it is embodied. He must believe that such an offer is made,—is made to him,—is made to him by God. If he believe not these, the truths of the gospel cannot be truths to him, and, therefore, it is no wonder that such an one should treat them as idle tales. But let these truths be believed by any man, and the natural consequence will be, his acceptance of the offered salvation. Thus it is, that through means of faith, or, as it is elsewhere said, through means of the true word of the gospel,³ a man comes to be pardoned, justified, and accepted in the sight of God. Strictly speaking, his faith does not save him; it is Christ's atonement that saves him. Nor is it his faith even that gives him an interest in that atonement; that is obtained by the act of accepting God's offer, to which faith naturally leads. But as this will not take place without the belief of God's testimony, the scriptures lay great stress on faith as that without which there can be no salvation.⁴

¹ Rev. xxii. 17.

³ Col. i. 5.

² 1 John v. 9.

⁴ APPENDIX, Note S.

4. When we say that a man is justified by faith, we mean that he is then and thenceforward treated by God on terms not of bare justice, but of free favour. In other words, as respects his past sins they are all blotted out, and as respects the sins he may still commit, God stands ready to forgive them freely on his penitence and reformation. I cannot say that I am prepared to adopt the common phraseology employed respecting justification, viz., that "it is an *act* of God's grace whereby he pardons our sins," &c. By *act*, in such language, must be meant *judicial sentence*, for that is the proper act in forgiving a transgression. Now, *when*, *where*, and to *whom* is this sentence pronounced by God in respect to the sinner? Where is it recorded? In whose hearing is it uttered? Or what scripture tells us that such a thing takes place? Such phraseology has arisen, I think, from overlooking the fact that in scripture God is often said to do a thing, when he acts as if he had done it. Thus he is said to be angry, to repent, &c., when all that is meant is, that he acts as *if* he were angry, and as if he had repented. So in the case of the sinner's justification. When a man believes the gospel there is no formal sentence of acquittal pronounced on him by God; at least scripture tells us nothing of any such sentence, but points us rather forward to the closing scene of all—to the final judgment, as the period when the sentence shall be pronounced in open court, and when the followers of

Christ shall “find mercy of the Lord.” But as God is pleased, so to speak, to *anticipate* that sentence, and even in this world to treat the believer as if it were already past, so scripture speaks of such an one as even *now* justified, and having therefore peace with God.

I must protest also against the doctrine sometimes taught by the advocates of salvation by grace, that on the belief of the truth a man receives the pardon of all his sins at once,—past, present, and to come. For this I can find no warrant in the Bible. Sins committed after justification are, upon the principles it inculcates, just as much sins as if they had been committed before justification, and must be washed away by repeated applications to the grace of God through Christ. Sin unrepented of is sin unforgiven; sin indulged and fostered after justification acquires an additional enormity in the sight of God; and for any one to take comfort whilst practising sin, from the idea that he is at peace with God, is to labour under a delusion alike dishonouring to God, and pernicious to himself.

5. When a sinner has, by being justified through the belief of the truth, been received into the family of God, he is, at the same time, made fit to be a member of that family, by being renewed in the spirit of his mind. His principles, his tastes, his emotions, are all purified and elevated. His mind is brought into a state of accordance with the mind of

God. The gift of God's Holy Spirit is conferred upon him, to dwell within him, to carry on in him the work of sanctification, and to ripen him for the full enjoyment of the heavenly world. In this way, he who, by the reception of the gospel, passes from death unto life, is enabled to go forward in the divine life, and is in God's appointed time and way made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.

6. Having, in this chapter, referred so much to the subject of baptism, I cannot conclude without offering a few remarks on the relation in which that ordinance stands to the doctrine of salvation as just stated. That a connection of some sort exists between these two may be regarded as indisputable; the only question respects the *nature* of that connection. The catholics, as we have already seen, represent the connection as that of *means* and *end*, regarding regeneration as produced by baptism. Repudiating this notion, there are two others between which to choose. The one is that baptism is the *sign* or *token* of regeneration; the other is that baptism is the *symbol* of regeneration and the *memorial* of the truths thereto pertaining. According to the former of these opinions, evidence must be first sought of an individual's conversion, and then baptism is to be administered to him in token of this fact. According to the latter, the personal conversion of the party receiving the rite may or may not be signified by it, according to

circumstances, whilst in either case the rite itself, as such, has its proper design, which is simply to indicate the general truth that man stands in need of purifying, and that the religion of Jesus is one which can and does purify. If the party baptised be in circumstances to couple with the reception of the rite a profession of his conversion to God, his baptism may be regarded as a token of his conversion; but this, according to the latter view, is a mere *accident*, and not an *essential* of the ordinance. This seems the preferable view, as the other makes baptism what no rite ever was before. The true idea of a rite is that it is a visible symbol of invisible truth, and it can become a sign or token of a fact, only from the accident of its being administered in a particular way. Thus, the Lord's supper is a symbol of spiritual participation of the benefits of Christ's death, and it becomes a token of any individual's actually so participating, only from the accident of such an one's professing to have such participation in the act of observing it. The ordinance itself betokens nothing except the great truth that there is remission of sins through Christ's blood. So is it, I apprehend, with baptism. In itself baptism is a mere symbol of regeneration—a mere declaration that man needs cleansing, and that in the religion of Christ the means of such cleansing are provided. It can become a token that any individual is so cleansed only by being accompanied by his profession that he is so.

Whether such a profession is in this case, as in that of the Lord's supper, indispensable to the right administration of the ordinance is another question on which I do not here enter further than to *assume*, for reasons which might be stated, that it is not. What I am concerned about at present is the determination of the essential meaning of baptism in its relation to the doctrine of salvation.

Baptism, then, may be said to stand associated with regeneration in this way: When it is administered, whether on a child or an adult, it announces the great truth of the regeneration of man through the work of Christ. It is a sermon, so to speak, by symbol, just as a discourse from the pulpit is a sermon by words. And exactly as a discourse may or may not benefit those who hear it, baptism may or may not benefit those who witness it. In neither case can a child receive any benefit directly. In the case of baptism the child is itself part of the sermon intended for the benefit of others; and such benefit as can accrue to him comes derivatively through the effect produced by the ordinance on his parents.

If any shall think that by this doctrine I lower the importance of this ordinance, I offer my reply in the words of the late excellent Bishop Shuttleworth: "It can be no derogation from the value of the sacramental institutions of our Saviour, to say of them, that whilst they rank foremost among the means of grace vouchsafed to us by our Maker, their

efficacy still consists in their reference to a higher principle which they *typically represent*, and from which they derive their entire value. We cannot be too grateful that we are allowed to be partakers of them ; but it is because they point directly to the expiation made for sin by the sacrifice of our Redeemer, and lead on and fix our thoughts in that direction, that they are endued with that spiritual potency which every Christian must believe them to possess. As memorials and types of the atonement, they stand foremost in the catalogue of Christian ordinances ; but their excellence is still merely derivative, and depends entirely upon that one great truth which constitutes the fundamental doctrine of our religion, and without which they would be without meaning, and consequently unproductive of benefit.”¹

¹ Three Sermons on Justification by Faith, &c., p. 41. The same view of the nature and use of the sacraments is given in the Apology for the Augustan Confession, vii. p. 200 : “Corda per verbum et ritum movet Deus, ut credant et concipiant fidem. Sicut enim verbum incurrit in aures, ut feriat corda ; ita ritus ipsa incurrit in oculos, ut moveat corda. Idem effectus est verbi et ritus, sicut praeclare dictum est ab Augustino, sacramentum esse verbum visibile, quia ritus oculis accipitur et est quasi pictura verbi, idem significans, quod verbum.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Ἀρχὴ μὲν πίστις, τέλος δὲ ἀγάπη· τὰ δὲ δύο ἐν ἐνότητι γινόμενα Θεοῦ ἐστίν, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα πάντα εἰς καλοκἀγαθίαν ἀκόλουθα ἐστίν.

“The beginning is faith, the end love; and these two being in unity are of God, and all other things conducing to perfect virtue are consequent.”—IGNATIUS in *Ep. ad Ephes.* § 14.

Αὕτη κυρίως ζωὴ ὁπηνίκα πρὸς τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐσμὲν νεκροί.

“This is life, indeed, whenever we are dead to sin.”—THEOPHYLACT. *Comment. in Ep. ad Rom.*, cap. 8.

HAVING already inquired how a man may enter upon the Christian course, we have now to consider what are the characteristics of the course itself, and what duties devolve upon those who would prosecute it aright. The topics belonging to this inquiry may be conveniently arranged under three heads; of which the first respects the grand design of the Christian life; the second the general character of that life; and the third, the means, by the use of which its character may be best preserved, and its design best secured. On all these points we shall have occasion to observe a marked and melancholy discrepancy between the doctrines of the Oxford Tractators, and those authorised by the statements of the New Testament.

SECTION I.

DESIGN OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

The opinion of the catholics as contrasted with that of their evangelical opponents concerning the purpose or design of the Christian life, may be briefly stated thus:—Both set out with the assumption, that when a man becomes a Christian, all his previous sins are forgiven and taken away, and both admit that, notwithstanding this, through temptation, infirmity, and remaining corruption, the Christian is continually falling into sin; but whilst the latter hold that forgiveness is to be obtained for each sin, even now, through the blood of Christ, and exhort the Christian to seek such forgiveness by repentance and prayer, so that at last he may be found to have walked worthy of his profession; the former forbid him to look for forgiveness before the day of judgment, and admonish him, in the mean time, by deeds of penitence, humiliation, mortification, and charity, to so strengthen the grace of God that is within him, that at last he may obtain acquittal and acceptance with God. Both thus speak of *justification* as the end at which the Christian is to aim; but with the one party the justification is that which consists in *forgiveness*, with the other it is that which

consists in *approval*. In other words, the one aims at justifying himself as a sinner, the other aims at justifying himself as a saint; the one seeks to live so that the judge may say to him at last, "Thy sins are forgiven thee;" the other so as to receive the verdict, "Well done good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

In bringing these conflicting views to the standard of scripture, for the purpose of attempting to arbitrate between them, I shall, passing over a number of minor considerations, endeavour to show, 1. That the catholic view is incompatible with the scripture doctrine of salvation through Christ alone; and, 2. That it is not supported by the doctrine of scripture concerning justification by works.

1. The scripture doctrine concerning the salvation of man through Christ is briefly this, that because of what Christ has done, all who come unto God through him receive remission of their sins, and are treated by God as if they had not sinned. On the ground of his Son's propitiatory work, God gives blessing to the unworthy, the rebellious, and the vile, when they turn from sin, and sincerely supplicate his grace. It is on that ground alone, however, that this is done. "Other foundation," says the apostle, "can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus." "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." "This is the record that God hath

given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." If our sinful state is set forth under the emblem of a state of debt, it is Christ who has paid our debt, and thereby secured our freedom. If, because of depravity, we are represented as sold under sin, and enslaved to Satan, it is Christ who has paid the price of our redemption, and who sets us at liberty. If, like sheep, we have gone astray, it is he on whom our iniquity has been laid, and who, as the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, recovers us from our wanderings. If, in our folly and guilt, we have wandered from God, it is Christ who brings us back by his blood. If through sin we are dead, it is Christ who gives us life. Christ, in short, in the matter of our salvation, is all in all, the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last.¹

Now, it can hardly bear a question, that whatever leads a man to think that his acceptance with God depends, in any degree, upon something which is over and above the work of Christ as *already* finished, comes into direct collision with the doctrine thus taught in scripture. If any thing more be required as a ground of our final forgiveness than the death of Christ, then there *must* be another foundation on which we have to build besides that which is already laid. If any part of our debt remain uncanceled, beyond all question Christ has not already paid all

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 11; Eph. ii. 8; 1 John v. 11; 1 Tim. ii. 6; 1 Pet. i. 19; Is. liii. 6; Col. iii. 4, &c.

that is required for our acquittal. These two statements are not only irreconcilable, they are absolutely destructive the one of the other.

The force of this as an argument against the popish doctrine of absolution, is fully felt, and strongly urged by Dr Pusey and his friends. According to that doctrine, it is by the sacrament of penance, as it is called, that the sins of Christians are to be remitted, and in virtue of inherent holiness, that they are accepted of God at last. Of the former of these notions, Dr Pusey justly remarks, that, in connection with the other doctrines of Romanism, with which it stands associated, especially the distinction between venial and mortal sins, it "favours the corruptions of carnal men, stifles the misgivings which might awaken them from their security, lowers the tone and standard whereat they are to aim, and throws them on the church, to whom the dispensation of those treasures are committed, rather than on Him in whose name she dispenses them."¹

The latter of these notions is denounced by Mr Newman, as tending "to fix the mind on self, not on Christ,"² and to represent "the influences of grace as a something to bargain about, and buy and traffic with."³ All this is perfectly just; and as regards the censure pronounced on the former of these notions, the judge may be regarded as having come to give

¹ Letter to the Bishop of Oxford, pp. 86, 87:

² Lectures on Justification, Lect. viii. p. 220.

³ Ibid., p. 216.

his verdict with clean hands, for there is nothing in the Anglo-catholic system that corresponds to the Romish doctrine of present absolution through penance. The same, however, cannot be said of the sentence pronounced on the latter of these doctrines, which seems to me substantially involved in Mr Newman's own views.

The Anglo-catholics appear to hope to protect their doctrine concerning the final justification of the Christian from the charge of being incompatible with the scripture doctrine of salvation through Christ alone, by studiously maintaining, that the ground of that justification is not any inherent goodness in us, but solely the indwelling presence of Christ in the soul. They regard our obedience as "the condition, not of our acceptance or pardon, but of the continuance of that sacred Presence which is our true righteousness, as an immediate origin."¹ As to this theory of the source of our justification in the sight of God, I have already said that it is either meaningless and so far harmless, or unscriptural and inconsistent with its author's own admissions. With this, however, at present we have nothing to do; the point to be considered here is, whether the continuance of Christ's Spirit in the Christian, in consequence of his obedience, can be regarded as the ground of his final justification, without impeaching the doctrine of acceptance through Christ alone.

¹ Newman on Justification, Lect. viii. p. 214.

And here I observe in the *first* place, that the presence of Christ by his Spirit in the soul of the Christian is no part of our Saviour's propitiatory work. It is a blessing *resulting* to the believer from that work,—the greatest and best of the blessings so resulting,—that which is the earnest of his future glory and joy even whilst on earth; but it is not itself any part of that work. If, then, we are to be accepted of God at last on the ground of Christ's Spirit being in us, we are to be accepted, not on the ground of the work of Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the world, but on the ground of something which flows out of that work, viz., the gift of the Spirit to dwell within us. What is this, but almost in so many words to deny the scripture doctrine of acceptance through Christ alone? In the *second* place, I confess I cannot discover any great practical difference between this doctrine and that of the Romanists. The latter say that we are to be justified at last on the ground of goodness inherent in ourselves, produced in us by God's grace, and fostered by our acts of obedience. The Anglicans, protesting against this as a blinding error, say that we are to be accepted on the ground of the presence within us of the Divine Spirit, which makes us holy, and whose continuance within us is secured by our obedience. The only difference between these two systems is, the one makes the goodness effected by the Spirit in us, and the other makes



the Spirit which effects the goodness, the ground of our acceptance with God. But this difference, practically, amounts to nothing; for Mr Newman tells us that the continuance of the divine gift in the soul depends upon our acting as God enjoins, so that it is *our own conduct*, after all, which must form the ground of our confidence before God at last. According to this view, if we live holily and virtuously as we ought, a growing measure of the justifying presence will be conveyed to us, whilst, on the other hand, if we act so as to grieve and quench the Spirit, his presence will be withdrawn, and we shall be left to meet the Judge of all without any justifying grace. Of such a doctrine, I confess, I can make nothing practically, but just what Mr Newman, in the words already quoted, makes of the Romish doctrine, that it represents "the influences of grace as a something to bargain about, and buy, and traffic with." Salvation is, on this theory, as plainly a case of mere barter between man and God as can well be conceived. Man gives obedience for his part, and God gives the Spirit for his; and the final result is determined by striking a balance, as it were, between the degree in which the Spirit, thus earned, has been given on the one hand, and the extent of man's ill-desert as a sinner on the other. Of such a doctrine it were below the truth to say that it is no better than that of the Papists; it is worse—greatly worse, for whilst the Papist only aims at meriting forgiveness through

assisting grace, the teacher of this doctrine would have men to believe that the gift of God—the assisting grace itself—may be purchased by human obedience.

2. Whilst the Anglo-catholic opinion, that the design of the Christian life is to work out our acceptance in the sight of God, thus comes into collision with the scripture doctrine of justification by grace, it receives no support, as its advocates contend it does, from the scripture doctrine of justification by works.

This doctrine is most fully unfolded to us by the apostle James, in the second chapter of his Epistle, from the 14th to the 26th verse. It is not, however, peculiar to him. Our Lord himself repeatedly taught the same doctrine whilst he was on earth. “A good man,” said he on one occasion, “out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”¹ On another occasion he declared that none should enter into the kingdom of Heaven but he “who should do the will of his Father.”² And in all his references to the future judgment, he distinctly brings forward the truth that it is by our works that we are to be judged³—a truth

¹ Matt. xii. 35-37.

² Ibid. vii. 21.

³ Ibid. xxv., &c.

which both the Old Testament and the New, elsewhere, abundantly conspire to teach.

There can be no doubt, then, that in some sense men are to be tried by their works, and that there is a justification to be attained in this way. The only question that can be agitated respects the *design* of this trial, and the *nature* of the justification thence resulting.

On these two points the catholics pronounce unhesitatingly that the design of the trial is to determine whether the party have that in him which shall entitle him to acceptance with God, and that the justification to be obtained by the true Christian, consists in his being actually so accepted. In opposition to this, evangelical doctrine teaches that the design of our being tried by our works at last, is the *manifestation* of the fitness of the believer, on the one hand, and the unfitness of the sinner, on the other, for the heavenly inheritance: and that the justification of the believer by his works, consists in the *declaration* which shall thus be given of his sincerity, steadfastness, and fidelity as a follower of Christ.

In order to determine which of these views is the correct one, we have only to look carefully at the passages already referred to. Let us take, in the first instance, our Lord's teaching, concerning the rule of the final judgment. This rule, he says, is the conduct of the man, both by word and deed, whilst on earth. But *what*, I ask, does he show us is to be

tested by this rule? Is it the man's degree of desert in the sight of God? Is it the extent to which he has retained the gift of the Spirit? Of these things there is no mention in any of the passages in which he speaks of this subject. In every case it is the sincerity of the man's profession as a child of God, or the reality of his ungodliness as a child of Satan, which our Saviour announces as the thing to be manifested by this appeal to the individual's works whilst on earth. In the passage where he says "by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned," the previous context shows that the point to which the sentence of justification or condemnation refers, is not, whether the man deserve God's grace or not, but simply whether professing to be a good man, he did so order his speech as to bring out of the treasures of his heart good things, and thereby *prove*, as every good man will do, that his profession was sincere. Again, when he says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven," he is not surely to be understood as stating the *grounds* on which his people shall enter heaven, but, as the whole context shows, is pointing to good works as the characteristic fruits of connection with the kingdom of heaven—the appropriate indications of meetness for its full enjoyment. And, finally, when our Lord refers to the procedure which He,

as Judge of all, will follow at the day of judgment, especially in that detailed account of the whole which we have in Matt. xxv. 31-46, it seems perfectly obvious that the appeal which he describes himself as making to the good deeds of the righteous, on the one hand, and to the evil deeds of the wicked, on the other, is not for the purpose of establishing a ground on which the former may be acquitted, whilst the latter are condemned, but solely for the sake of clearly manifesting that the former were really and sincerely devoted to Christ, and therefore fit for that place which had been prepared for his people, whilst the latter were in heart opposed to him, and therefore fit only for that place where his great adversary reigns. Unless this view be adopted, it will not be easy to account for our Saviour's referring only to deeds of *charity*, as if these, and not much rather deeds of penitence and self-mortification, were the proper means of attaining that justification which, as catholics teach, we have to work for whilst on earth. It will be difficult, also, on any other view to say why our Lord should attribute to the righteous feelings of *astonishment*—feelings which the words put into their mouths plainly bespeak—at the commendations bestowed upon them; for, if the good works done by them, are the *ground* of their acceptance by Christ at last, why should the putting of these to their account be viewed by them as in any way surprising, since this is only using these works for the very purpose

which those who performed them intended them to serve?

There does not then seem to be any foundation for the catholic doctrine of justification by works in the teaching of our Lord. Let us now turn to that of his apostle James, who, as already remarked, has entered with much explicitness upon this subject.

It would be preposterous in such an inquiry as the present, to attempt anything like a review of the many opinions which have been advanced for the purpose of explaining the passage in the Epistle of James, and reconciling its statements with those of Paul concerning justification by faith alone.¹ Without making any such attempt, I shall content myself with briefly stating my reasons for regarding the apostle as speaking of the justification not of sinners as such, but of professing saints as such, before God.

1. It is to be observed, that the case which James has in hand, and in reference to which all his statements are uttered, is that of a man “who *says* he has faith, and has not works,” verse 14. The case, then, is not that of a sinner as such seeking pardon

¹ The reader may study with much advantage the following treatises on this subject:—F. Turretini *Exercitatio Theol. de Concordia Pauli et Jacobi in Articulo Justificationis*. 4to. Lugd. Bat. 1696. G. Chr. Knappii *de dispari formula docendi qua Christus, Paulus, atque Jacobus de fide et factis disserentes uti sunt, &c., in Script. var. argumenti*, p. 411. Wardlaw's *Sermons*, serm. v. Edin. 1829. Neander's *Paulus und Jacobus, die einheit des Evangelischen geistes in verschiedenen formen*. *Kleine Gelegenheitschriften*, s. 103. Berlin, 1824. Frommann *über das verhältniss zwischen Jacobus und Paulus*. *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*. Jahrg. 1833, s. 84.

for his sins, but that of a man seeking to maintain the character of a saved person by a mere profession of faith without works. Now, this case is one totally different from that which the apostle Paul handles in the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians, where he insists so much on justification by faith alone. The parties against whom he there writes, were persons who sought *pardon* by a meritorious obedience. The parties against whom James writes were persons who sought *to be accounted Christians* on a profession alone, unsupported by obedience. Both these parties were in error, but the ground they occupied was so opposite, that in assailing them from the middle point of truth, the one apostle, as it were, had to turn his back upon the other. The proper answer to the one party was, that the justification they sought, viz. that of *pardon*, was procurable not by works but by faith alone. The proper answer to the other was, that the justification they sought, viz. that of *approval*, was not to be attained by *saying* they had faith, but by *showing* they had faith by their works. In this way, all collision between the doctrines of the two apostles is avoided. The statements of both are true in relation to the parties respecting whose views they wrote ; and they are in perfect harmony with each other, so long as we do not take the statement of the one and apply it to the case of the other. The reasoning of Paul would be quite inap-

propriate in the case of those with whom James argues, for they were persons who started from the very point Paul is labouring to prove; they said they had faith, *i.e.* they professed to have obtained justification by faith. No less inappropriate would be the reasoning of James, in the case of those whom Paul opposed, for they, instead of depreciating works, were inclined to attach to them an undue and a dangerous importance. Viewing the words of James, then, in their relation to the case on which they were designed by him as the organ of the divine Spirit to bear, we must regard him as teaching that good works are necessary not for procuring forgiveness of sins at last, but for justifying before God and before men the profession of those who say that they have faith.

2. Lest any should imagine, that to understand the word *justify* in the sense thus attached to it, is to force a meaning on this word which it does not naturally bear, I beg to remark, that the meaning thus given to the term is quite legitimate. The word *δικαίω* rendered in our version by *justify*, is a forensic term, and expresses the act of pronouncing a favourable sentence on the party at the bar. Now, a man may appear in a court of justice in two very different characters: He may stand there as *a criminal* to answer some charge against him; or he may appear there as *the claimant of some honour or privilege* which he considers as belonging to him. In ei-

ther case, the judge, in pronouncing sentence in his favour, *justifies* him, in the one case *from* the charges laid against him, in the other case, *in* the claim which he prefers. The use of the word *justify*, therefore, to express the sentence of *approval* pronounced upon the consistent follower of Christ at last, is perfectly legitimate. His case, in receiving that sentence, is analogous to that of the person who appears before a judge as the claimant of some right, and receives an award in his favour; not, indeed, that the Christian can claim heaven as his right, but that, having in Christ obtained a possession there, he can justify his pretensions through grace, to enter upon the enjoyment of that possession, by showing that he has been "made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light."

3. The correctness of the view thus taken of the apostle James's doctrine in this passage, will be best evinced by observing the course of illustration which he himself pursues in support of his position. That position is contained in the 14th verse, the purport of which is, that for a man to say that he has faith whilst he has not works, is fruitless; the faith which he thus *says* he has, cannot save him.¹ This thesis the apostle proceeds to illustrate by various examples, some by analogy, and others directly tend-

¹ This is evidently the force of ἡ πίστις, "*the* faith," in the second clause of this verse, as compared with πίστιν, without the article, in the preceding clause.

ing to show, that while real faith justifies itself by corresponding deeds, the faith which has no other sign of existence than the mere profession of the party who says he has it, is a dead faith; in plain language, no faith at all.

The case first adduced by James, is that of a man using to a suffering brother the language of charity, whilst he puts forth no effort for the relief of that brother's wants. In regard to such a piece of conduct, the apostle repeats the question, "What doth it profit?" and then adds, "Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead, being alone." Now, where is the point of comparison between the two cases which are thus, by the words "even so," brought into this relation with each other? Is it not obviously in this, that as a profession of *charity*, which is followed by no corresponding acts of beneficence, is a mere empty pretence, so a profession of *faith*, which is followed by no corresponding works, is nothing better? And is not the inference which James means us to draw just this, that in point of fact, as in the former case there is no charity, so in the latter there is no faith?

In the 18th verse, the apostle goes on to challenge those whom he is opposing, to adduce any evidence of the existence of that faith of which they boasted. "Thou hast faith, and I have works," says he; "show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." Here the

apostle speaks as one who had both faith and works, and valued the latter as the fruits and evidences of the former; and being thus prepared to show the reality of his faith, he challenges his opponents to do the same. The force of such a challenge is plainly tantamount to a declaration that *they* had no faith to show. If they had faith, they had a reality, and that reality they *might* exhibit; not, indeed, by works, such as the apostle displayed, but in some other way appropriate to a faith which had not works. In that case, the triumphant challenge of the apostle would be without meaning or use. The man who had the faith without the works, instead of being silenced by such a demand, would only have to come forward and show the faith he had, to turn the apostle's words into a mere empty bravado. They can be viewed as "the words of truth and soberness," only on the supposition that his challenge *could not* be met,—that the man who said he had faith without works, could not show this faith, because he had no faith to show.

In further illustration of his position, that real faith always manifests itself by appropriate effects on those who possess it, James says in the 19th verse, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou dost well; the devils also believe and tremble." Now, what is the bearing of this on the subject which the apostle is discussing? Does he mean to teach, as some would have us to believe, that the

faith of those whose doctrines he is controverting, is no better than that of devils? Manifestly not; for he expressly says, that they *do well* in believing that, the belief of which makes devils tremble. What the apostle evidently teaches is this, that real faith is an energetic principle, producing effects on those in whom it dwells, appropriate to the peculiar bearing of the facts it embraces upon their individual interests. Thus the belief of the *same* fact, that, viz. of the divine existence, promotes the well-being of man, and fills the devils with fear. To the former it affords an impulse towards good; to the latter it conveys only a certainty of punishment. But whilst the results thus produced by the belief of this truth are so very different in these two cases, the *principle* of operation is identical in both. It is faith which in both cases produces the result; and this is what the apostle wishes to show, as bearing on his position that faith without a corresponding result is no faith at all.

In the following verses, James adduces the case of Abraham as that of one who was justified by works when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar. Respecting the meaning of this declaration concerning Abraham, there can be no doubt, whether we consider the account given by Moses of the transaction referred to, or look at what James himself says regarding it in this context. The sole question now before us is, In what way was Abraham justified by offering his son on the altar? Was he justified as a

sinner from guilt? or, as a professed believer in God, was his profession *sustained* by this act, and he justified thereby in making that profession? On this point neither Moses nor James leaves room for hesitation. By neither is the least reference made to Abraham's obtaining pardon and acceptance as a sinner through that transaction, whilst both unequivocally state, that by his obedience on that occasion he vindicated his character, manifested his faith, and justified his profession. "Now *I know*," said Jehovah unto him, "*that thou fearest God*, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me."¹ The trial of the patriarch on this occasion was a trial as to the soundness of his profession that he feared God, and the result was a full proof of his sincerity. Hence the apostle says, "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" Abraham was a believer: he claimed to be esteemed the servant and the friend of God. But he did not content himself with merely *saying* he had faith. He allowed his faith full scope and development. His faith and works co-operated. Faith in him had its perfect work. Justified from sin through faith, (for, says this very apostle, "he believed God, and it was counted to him for justification,") he justified his faith by his works, and thus became a memorable example and illustration of

¹ Gen. xxii. 12.

the truth, that not by faith only, but by works also, must the true child of God be justified.

The last case adduced by the apostle is that of Rahab, who received the Israelites who had been sent to spy out the land of Canaan, hid them from the people of the land, and at length despatched them in safety. In this James tells us, she was justified by works. Now, *how* was she justified? Was this action deemed meritorious in the sight of God, and put to her account as so much in her favour at the great reckoning? Of this there is not the slightest hint in the narrative as given by Joshua. Nay, it is more than probable, from her conduct as a whole, that she was not at this time a woman who feared God, and therefore not one, according to catholic views, who was in a condition to work for final acceptance with him. From the history of the transaction, however, we find that she made a profession to the spies, of her confident belief that the Israelites should ultimately occupy the land of Canaan. Now, this might have been made merely to decoy them, in order the more easily to give them up to the power of those who sought their lives. But Rahab's belief was sincere. She had seen how in every other case the Israelites had proved victorious over those who sought to withstand their progress. She had no doubts that ultimately they would be masters of the land of Canaan. This influenced her in her conduct to the spies, and led her,

at the risk of her own life, to preserve theirs. Her deeds thus justified her profession, and rendered her case another illustration of the apostle's principle, that where faith in *any thing* really dwells in the mind, it will manifest itself by corresponding works.

Having recapitulated these cases, the apostle, in verse 26, draws the general inference which he would have his readers to deduce from the whole, viz., that, "as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." A body deprived of the principle of life may retain much of the outward symmetry of the living form, but it is, notwithstanding, a mere useless mass, nothing else than the mere *appearance* of a man; and so in like manner faith that does not show itself by its works affords no evidence that it has any life-principle in it; it is but a dead body so far as any one can see; it is therefore useless, and to all real intents and purposes has no existence.

From this survey of the train of illustration pursued by the apostle in this passage, it must, I think, be evident that, so far from his teaching any thing in the slightest degree inconsistent with the doctrine of justification by faith alone, his grand design is to preserve that doctrine from abuse, and to show that whenever a man has really obtained acceptance with God through Christ, he will manifest this by "a walk and conversation becoming the gospel." His design is to remind professing Christians that

mere profession will not stand the test at last,—that Christianity is a religion of living, operative, sanctifying power,—and that those alone can be regarded now, or will be regarded at last, as true sons of God, who prove that they are so by doing the works of God. His doctrine is neither beyond nor beside that of Paul, but in full accordance with it. He in fact only follows in the train of Paul, when, after establishing the doctrine of justification by faith alone, that apostle proceeds to inculcate so urgently upon the Romans the duties of practical religion, exhorting them not to “let sin reign in their mortal bodies that they should obey it in the lusts thereof, but as made free from sin, and having become servants of God, to have their fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life.”¹

Assuming the soundness of the reasonings on which the preceding inquiry has proceeded, it follows that the catholic view of the design of the Christian life is not only unauthorised by scripture, but stands opposed to some of its leading doctrines. That salvation is to be obtained by guilty man solely through the merits of the work of Christ, already finished on the accursed tree, is the foundation of the Christian edifice; and whatever interferes with this is corrupting and pernicious error. With this, the opinion that Christians are here to perfect their

¹ Rom. vi, 12, 13.

triumph over the devil, the world, and the flesh, to approve themselves genuine servants of God, and to grow in meetness for heaven, is wholly harmonious. But to represent this their probation as intended to secure, in any degree, their acceptance with God as sinners, by the forgiveness of their sins at last, is to pervert the gospel, to confound the cause with its effects, and to imbue the minds of the multitude with a spirit of bondage, self-righteousness, and delusion.

SECTION II.

CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

I pass on to consider the view which the Anglo-catholics take of the *general character of the Christian life*.

On this head there are several points of accordance between them and evangelical Christians. Both, viewing the present state of believers as one of probation, concur in representing its general character as one of watchfulness, labour, and prayer. In the estimation of both, the Christian has many wicked lusts to subdue, many temptations to evil to resist, many virtuous habits to attain, many purifying trials to pass through. By both, his position is regarded as one of difficulty and of danger; to

maintain which successfully he must ever be as a soldier on the field fully armed and anxiously on the watch, or as a racer on the course, stripped of every impediment and, with his eye fixed on the goal, straining every nerve to reach it with success.

The very different views, however, which these two parties entertain respectively regarding the design of this probationary course, cannot fail materially to influence their opinions concerning its general character. We find, accordingly, that whilst the one, believing that the pardon of sins is to be obtained by the Christian exactly in the same way *after* his conversion as *before* it, represent his state as one of predominating peace, joy, and spiritual triumph; the other, conceiving that no offence committed after baptism can be pardoned before the day of judgment, view the Christian here as called to rest under a continued load of unforgiven guilt, and, thus burdened, to go mourning all his days. That this latter is the opinion of Dr Pusey, the following extracts from his tracts on baptism will show :—

“ The fountain has been indeed opened to wash away sin and uncleanness, but we dare not promise men a second time the same easy access to it which they once had; that way is open but once; it were to abuse the power of the keys entrusted to us, again to pretend to admit them thus; now there remains only the ‘ baptism of tears,’ a baptism obtained, as the same Fathers said, with much fasting and with many prayers.—Tract 68, p. 59

“ ‘ We are then [in baptism] washed once for all in his blood’ . . .

‘if we again sin, there remaineth no more such complete ablution in this life. We must bear the scars of the sins which we have contracted; we must be judged according to our deeds.’—*Ib.* p. 63.

To the same effect are the following strictures on the evangelical system, in his Letter to the Bishop of Oxford.

“It used to be said that ‘the Romish was an easy religion to die in;’ but even the Romish, in its corruptions, scarcely offered terms so easy, at all events, made not a boast of the easiness of its terms; if it had but the dregs of the system of the ancient church, stale and unprofitable as these often were, they had yet something of the strength or the bitterness of the ancient medicine; they at least testified to a system, when men made sacrifices for the good of their souls, humbled themselves in dust and ashes; practised self-discipline; ‘accused and condemned themselves, that so they might find mercy at their heavenly Father’s hand for Christ’s sake, and not be accused and condemned in that fearful judgment;’ felt ‘the remembrance’ of their past sins to be ‘grievous unto’ them, ‘the burthen’ to be ‘intolerable;’ ‘were grieved and wearied with the burthen of their sins;’ ‘turned to God in weeping fasting and praying;’ ‘bewailed and lamented their sinful life, acknowledged and confessed their offences, and sought to bring forth worthy fruits of penance;’ and in cases of notorious sin, were ‘put to open penance, and punished in this world that their souls might be saved in the day of the Lord.’”

“Our church, my Lord, here as elsewhere, appears to me to hold a distinct line, however she has not been able as yet to revive the ‘goodly discipline’ which she feelingly deploras. Romanism, as well as Ultra-Protestantism, practically frees a man from his past sins; our church bids him confess that he is ‘tied and bound with the chain’ of them, and to pray Him that ‘the pitifulness of His great mercy may loose us.’”

On these statements I beg to submit the following remarks:—

1. Nothing can be more arbitrary than the distinction maintained by the catholics between sins committed before, and sins committed after baptism.

It is true, that sin in a Christian is more aggravated and flagrant than in one who makes no profession of Christianity; but whilst this is a strong reason for watchfulness on the part of the believer, that he be not betrayed into sin, it furnishes no ground whatever for pronouncing his sin unpardonable in the present world. The apostle tells us, that "the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God cleanseth from *all* sin;"¹ and unless it can be shown that there is some peculiarity in sin when committed by a Christian which renders it an exception, we must hold that the blood which cleansed away all his past sins when he became a Christian, will no less avail to cleanse away the sins into which he may fall in the course of his subsequent life. What is there in scripture, or the reason of the thing, to tempt any to think otherwise? Why should the fountain which has been opened for sin and for uncleanness be available only for *once*, when in this world there is no man who liveth and sinneth not? On what ground is it pretended, that a prayer for pardon, proceeding from a man just converted, will be answered, while one presented by a Christian of longer standing cannot be heard? If these things are so, let the scripture evidence in proof of them be adduced. In a matter of so much importance, let the voice of God be heard before we are called upon to believe.

¹ 1 John i. 7.

Until that is done, the barrier thus attempted to be drawn between the penitent Christian and that purifying fountain from which he has already found peace to his guilty conscience, can be regarded in no other light than as one of those instruments of oppression by which a human priesthood too often seeks to subjugate the minds of others to its sway.

2. The notion that forgiveness is not to be obtained by the penitent Christian in this world, is opposed to the express doctrine of scripture. That God is ever ready to forgive all who sincerely turn from their sins and ask forgiveness of him, is a truth so frequently stated in scripture, that the difficulty is to know where to begin our citations in support of it. Let the following passages suffice:—"If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins. Rejoice the soul of thy servant, for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift my soul. For thou, O Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon thee. It may be, that the house of Judah will hear all the evil I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin. Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he

delighteth in mercy. He will turn again; he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities: and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. In whom (Christ) we have (*ἔχομεν*, not shall have, or have had) redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. We have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need. If we confess our sins, he (God) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”¹ Let these passages of scripture, selected alike from the Old Testament and the New, be duly considered, and it can hardly admit of reasonable doubt, that the doctrine they teach is, that whosoever forsakes sin, turns unto God, and asks forgiveness, shall obtain it through the merits of Christ.

The same doctrine is involved in all the directions given to the early Christians for the proper treatment of offences between brethren. In these the

¹ 2 Chron. vii. 14; Psalm lxxxvi. 4, 5; Jer. xxxvi. 3; Mic. vii. 18, 19; Col. i. 14; Heb. iv. 15, 16; 1 John i. 9; ii. 1, 2.

foundation principle is, that we are to "forgive one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us."¹ But if our forgiveness of erring brethren is to be *as* God's forgiveness of us, it follows conversely, that God's forgiveness of us must be according to the rule which he has laid down for our forgiveness of each other. And what is that rule? We have it from the lips of our Lord himself, in these words: "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him."² The meaning of this is plainly, that *as often* as our brother repents, and turns again to us professing repentance, we are to forgive him. Comparing this with the statement of the apostle above quoted, can we resist the conclusion, that as often as we turn unto God, and sincerely say to him, "I repent," He will, and does forgive us?

What else but this is the tenor of our Lord's explanation of his act in washing the feet of his disciples?³ Peter, ignorant of the meaning of that act, no sooner heard that it was designed to symbolize the communication of cleansing efficacy from Christ to his disciples, than, passing from the extreme of false modesty to that of over-zeal, he exclaimed, "Not my feet only, but also my hands and my

¹ Eph. iv. 32.² Luke xvii. 3, 4.³ John xiii. 10.

head." Our Lord's reply is,—“He that is washed needeth not, save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.” This concluding expression is used not to limit the *cleanness*, but the *number* of those of whom our Saviour asserted that they were clean. From this number Judas was excluded; “for,” adds the evangelist, “he knew who should betray him; therefore said he ye are not all clean.” With this exception, however, the disciples were all clean; they had been washed, and, in consequence of this, needed not such ablution as Peter desired. What can such a statement be designed to teach if not this, that though, by connection with Christ, they had been cleansed of their sins in the laver of regeneration, yet as, in leaving a bath, the feet will come into contact with the defiling soil, and so need to be cleansed anew, so they, in like manner, living in this polluting world, had ever need to betake themselves unto Christ, by whom they had been cleansed at first, that each new stain might be thereby washed away? And if this *be* the meaning of our Saviour's words on this remarkable occasion, is not the whole transaction calculated to teach us that the fountain of his blood is ever open to his people, and that they have only in sincerity, in penitence, and in faith, to come to it, to receive forgiveness and cleansing according to their need?

3. The view given by Dr Pusey of the general cha-

racter of the Christian life, as one of sorrow, anxiety, and dread, is directly opposed to the whole tenor of scripture on this subject. Whilst the sacred writers do not cease to remind us, that, in the present world, there is danger to our spiritual interests from the many powerful and assiduous enemies that surround us; whilst they, therefore, cease not to exhort Christians to watchfulness, to resistance, and to prayer; and whilst they ever teach us to look upon sins into which we may have fallen with shame, humiliation, and abhorrence, they, at the same time, and in the clearest manner, announce to us, that the spirit of Christianity is one of liberty, that the course of the Christian should be one of triumph and assurance, and that it is not only his privilege, but his duty to "rejoice always." When the angel announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds, he said, "Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people;" and the multitude of the heavenly host which suddenly appeared after this announcement had been made, followed it up by "praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will towards men." With this the whole tenor of our Lord's teaching accords: witness his parting discourse to his disciples, as recorded by John in the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of his

¹ Luke ii. 10, 14.

Gospel, especially these touching words,—“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” In the Acts of the Apostles, we find continual mention made of the joy which the reception of the gospel inspired in those who believed, adding a new charm to the common pleasures of life, whilst it opened up a fountain of felicity such as all the ills of life could not exhaust.¹ In the Epistles language of the most exulting kind is employed in reference to the happiness of the Christian’s life. “Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear,” says Paul to the Romans, “but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father.” “We joy in God,” says he again, “through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” To the Philippians the same apostle says,—“Rejoice in the Lord, and again I say unto you rejoice,” adding, in reference to the spiritual dangers to which they were exposed, “And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”² The apostle John declares that his design in writing his first epistle to his brethren was “that their joy might be full;” and for this purpose he dilates on the confidence which they have in Christ as their advocate with the Father, and the propitia-

¹ Comp. ch. ii. 46; viii. 8, &c.

² Rom. viii. 15; v. 11; Phil. iv. 4, 7, &c.

tion for their sins, on their elevated privileges as the sons of God, and on the power of love in which "there is no fear" to "cast out that fear which hath torment."¹ It seems hardly possible to read such passages as these (and the Bible is full of them), without being convinced that well-founded peace and holy joy are blessings which it is the purpose of God to secure to his people, even in this world, through the gospel of his Son. A system which, instead of this, teaches Christians that their position here is one of unrelieved toil, perplexity, and penance, must be denounced as no less unscriptural than it is repulsive, disheartening, and bewildering.

4. The view which Dr Pusey gives of the Christian life is not so favourable to virtue and holiness as that which he opposes. On no argument do the Anglo-catholics, and Dr Pusey in particular, lay more stress, than on the superior tendency of their views to produce in the mind hatred of sin, and an ardent aspiration after holiness, as compared with the views held by evangelical Christians. They complain of the "easiness" of the evangelical system of salvation, as tending to heal slightly the wound of an awakened conscience, and as being in this respect practically more unfavourable to personal holiness than the system of priestly absolution in the church

¹ Ch. i. 4—9; ii. 1, 2; iii. 1; iv. 18; v. 14, &c.

of Rome. This is only the old objection against the doctrine of salvation by grace, of which the apostle Paul disposes in the 6th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where he most powerfully shows, that as the believer who is pardoned through Christ, is thereby brought under law to Christ, he is placed under greater obligations, and laid under immensely stronger motives to abstain from sin and follow after holiness, than if he had to trust to his own good deeds for acceptance with God. The conclusion at which the apostle arrives is, that Christians, "being made free from sin, and having become servants unto God, have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life," and that end not as of reward, but of grace; "for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Such a decision from such a source must be held as authoritatively settling the question respecting the practical tendency of evangelical views of salvation as through free grace,—grace which needs but to be devoutly asked in the name of Christ to be obtained.

What the reasoning of the apostle thus establishes, experience and the knowledge we have of the laws of the human mind amply confirm. The question is simply one between the power of *fear* and the power of *love*, as predominating principles of virtuous action in the mind of a Christian. According to both parties in this controversy the duty of the

Christian is to abstain from all sin, and to follow after all holiness; but the one contend that he will be most effectively constrained to this by an incessant *dread* of being rejected of God at last as unworthy, while the other maintain that a far more powerful motive than this is furnished by that abiding sense of *gratitude* under which the reception of a gratuitous forgiveness lays the Christian. There seems hardly room for serious hesitation on the part of any candid and reflective person between these two opinions. Who does not know that gratitude for favours already experienced is ever more powerful over the mind of man than the dread of losing advantages which are yet prospective? The one emotion has all the urgency of a felt reality, the other has more or less of the feebleness of a remote contingency. The spirit of the latter is to render tardy, penurious, grudging obedience, on the principle of paying no more for the desired boon than will just suffice to secure it; the spirit of the former is to yield ready, generous, overflowing service, under the spontaneous impulse of honourable and ardent feeling.¹ It is so in the ordinary relations of life; and as the *nature* of the human mind is not changed by the reception of the gospel of Christ, there is no reason to suspect that it should be other-

¹ 'Εἰ γὰρ ἐπώλει τὰς χάριτας, ἢ μισθῶν ἐνεργεῖται, οὐδεὶς ἂν ὀφείλειν αὐτῶν ἐνόμισεν· ἀλλ' οἱ περὶ κα εὖ πιπρονότες οὗτοι ἀεὶ ἡδέως ὑπηρετοῦσι τῇ ἐνεργείῃ, καὶ διότι εὖ ἔπαθον, καὶ διότι προεπιστεύθησαν ἄξιοι εἶναι παρακαταθήκην χάριτος φυλάττειν. XENOPHON. *Agesil.* cap. 4.

wise in regard to the relation of the Christian to God. On the contrary, when we reflect on the light in which the doctrines of the gospel place the tremendous evil of sin on the one hand, and the unparalleled grace of God in freely forgiving sin through the work of Christ on the other, we must feel convinced that it is impossible for any man really to believe the gospel, and yet continue in the love or the allowed practice of sin. Such an one is necessarily led to measure the enormity of sin, not so much by its possible consequences to himself, as by the mysterious and immeasurable price that was paid for its forgiveness, and to estimate holiness, not so much by what he thinks it will bring to him of reward, but by what it is in itself as seen in the character of God, who, because he is "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," "spared not his own Son," but sent him into the world to "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Before such an one the wondrous love of Christ in dying for his redemption, that so the pardon of his sins might be freely secured to him, is ever present, and cannot fail to communicate to him a mighty impulse towards all which he knows to be in accordance with the will of Christ. Having had much forgiven, he has learned to love much; and much love will lead to much service. Besides, the very peace and buoyancy of mind which a conviction that acceptance with God depends not on our own services but on the already finished and

accepted work of Christ is calculated to inspire, is of itself favourable to active, zealous, and successful conflicts with sin. There is nothing more likely to impede our exertions for God than a harassing anxiety about the forgiveness of past sins. To carry this with us in our spiritual warfare, is to fight with an oppressive burden on our shoulders, which is becoming heavier day by day. Such a course cannot long be continued. Either the mind will sink under the paralysing load, or get rid of it by relinquishing the conflict. It is only when, like the publican, we go to God under a sense of sin, and pleading for forgiveness in Christ, on the ground of free grace alone, return justified, that we can bear up amid the toils and dangers of our spiritual warfare. It is only when the voice of the Redeemer says to us, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," that we have either courage or strength to "rise up and walk."

So much for the Anglo-catholic doctrine concerning the general character of the Christian life. I trust I have shown, though briefly, yet sufficiently, that this doctrine is recommended by neither scripture nor expediency; from which the just inference is, that it is to be repudiated by all who would consult wisely for their own spiritual interests. If generally received, its only effect, I fear, would be to enslave the minds of the sincere, and sear the consciences of the worldly. In either case the power of priestcraft would be augmented by the

greater dependence which both of these classes would place on the offices of the clergy; the one craving the aid which these promise in the work of contending with sin, the other seeking the repose which their supposed vicarious merit conveys. There can be no engine of priestly domination more crushingly oppressive than the keeping up in the minds of the people of the notion that there is no forgiveness of sins in this world. The spirit of man will bear any load but this. Penance, fastings, maceration, fines, imprisonment, death itself will all be endured sooner than this. The Romanist priest who for any of these pretends to absolve his penitent disciple, does not wield half so mighty an engine of sacerdotal tyranny, as the Anglican who tries to convince his follower that forgiveness is hopeless in this world, reserving at the same time the power of prescribing by what course the sinner may obtain forgiveness in that which is to come. How completely must the man who receives this be bowed down under a slavish sense of dependence on the priest—afraid to move lest he should commit some unauthorised act, or some deadly sin! Who that has ever known the dignity, the privilege, the peace, of that estate into which Christ brings his people, and of that liberty wherewith he makes them free, but must repudiate with a holy indignation, a system so enslaving, so degrading, and so destructive of all the freshness and beauty of the

Christian life? Happy they who have found the more excellent path of simple apostolical truth! Happy they who have learned to say with Bernard, "the last of the Fathers," who, monk and mystic as he was, had nevertheless glorious glimpses of gospel truth:—"To have God propitious to me, against whom alone I have sinned, suffices for my righteousness. Not to impute my sins, is as it were to blot out their existence. If my iniquity is great, thy grace is much greater. When my soul is troubled at the view of her sinfulness, I look at thy mercy and am refreshed."¹

SECTION III.

MEANS BY WHICH THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS TO BE PROMOTED, AND ITS ULTIMATE DESIGN SECURED.

Whilst all true Christians admit the necessity of a divine influence to advance the believer in his course towards heaven, there are few who do not also admit that it is the duty of the believer himself to use certain means which have a tendency to increase within him the power of holiness, and thereby to prepare him for the society, the exercises, and

¹ Quoted in Milner's Church Hist. vol. iv.

the joys of heaven. As, however, the admission of a general statement of truth by no means secures that all who thus admit it are agreed as to the particulars which it involves, we shall find that very different opinions are entertained in detail regarding the union of divine and human agency in the matter of man's salvation, by different parties, who nevertheless agree in the full admission of the general truth.

The doctrine of the Anglo-catholics on this head may be briefly stated in one sentence. Regarding the presence of the Spirit of Christ in the soul, as that in virtue of which we are to be accepted and approved at last, they consider it to be incumbent on the Christian to use the means which they believe God has appointed, more particularly the rites of the church, for the purpose of securing the continuance within him of that sacred presence.

In this doctrine there seems to me some truth mixed up with no small portion of error. It may be useful to attempt to discriminate between the two.

1. I admit cheerfully and gratefully that whatever is good in man is *directly* produced in him by the operation of the divine Spirit. It is God who "works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure." It is by the Holy Spirit that we are born again,—are enabled to fulfil the trust which God has reposed in us,—are strengthened with all

might in the inner man,—are taught to mortify the deeds of the body so as to live,—are “filled with love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” In short, we are in the matter of our salvation so completely dependent upon the power of God within us, that at whatever stage of the Christian journey we may have arrived,—whatever attainments we may have made,—whatever goodness we may have accumulated, it becomes us devoutly and adoringly to say with Paul, “By the grace of God I am what I am.” With these views I can have no hesitation in admitting further, that every Christian who is approved of God at last will owe that approval to the Spirit of God which has dwelt and operated within him. But this is something very different from the opinion that it is the presence of the divine Spirit within us which forms the *ground* of God’s final approval of us as his servants. This seems to me a doctrine not only unauthorised by scripture, but incompatible with the Christian’s position in this probationary state. When a man becomes a Christian he becomes a candidate for heaven. He enters upon a course the design of which is to fit him for heaven. This course he is bound to pursue, in the use of such means as God has prescribed. And when his term is closed, he has to abide his trial as to whether or not he has kept the course, and is entitled to the reward. Now the thing to be enquired for in such a case is

not, What influences have been at work to help the individual forward in his course? but, Does he, as he there stands at the bar, possess those qualities (however produced in him) which are required of him? Is he holy? Is he meet for the inheritance of the saints in light? To such questions it were surely no just answer to say, "He has the Spirit of God within him," for that would prove only that the power had been given, not that the effect had been realised. It is not the Spirit in us on which the Judge has to express his sentence; it is we ourselves, our holiness, our fitness for glory, on which the sentence has to be uttered. The approval of Christ is to be an approval of *us* in whom his Spirit dwells, not an approval of the *Spirit* which has dwelt in us.

2. God has appointed the use of means for the purpose of securing the continuance within our souls of his Holy Spirit. Thus he has commanded us to make prayer to him for this great blessing. When he says to his church, "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them," he adds, "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them."¹ Our Saviour, after referring to the readiness with which a parent grants his child's request for food, draws an encouragement from this to the children of God to ask of him his

¹ Ezek. xxxvi. 27, 37.

Spirit: "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."¹ Emboldened by such assurances, no less than by our Saviour's promises, the apostles were assiduous and earnest in their prayers for this blessing: witness their conduct after Christ's resurrection,² and the repeated instances in Paul's epistles of his presenting prayer on behalf of his brethren, that they might be endowed with this grace.³ From all this the truth plainly appears, that it is by means of prayer that the sacred and life-giving presence of the Divine Spirit is to be enjoyed by us. Nor is it by prayer alone that the continuance of this favour is to be secured. When the apostle speaks of our "yielding ourselves unto God," cautions us against our indulgence in "corrupt conversation" so as to "grieve the Holy Spirit whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption," and solemnly calls upon us not to "quench the Spirit,"⁴ his words can be understood in no other way than as teaching, that the cultivation of such habits, tempers, and dispositions, as are compatible with the residence within us of the "Spirit of holiness," is the indispensable condition of his abiding with us. So far, then, as the doctrine of the Anglo-catholics inculcates the neces-

¹ Luke xi. 13.

² Acts i. 4, 14.

³ Comp. Rom. xv. 13; Eph. i. 17; iii. 14—16, &c.

⁴ Rom. vi. 13; Eph. iv. 30; 1 Thess. v. 19.

sity of obedience and of prayer as conditions of our retaining the influences of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, it is doctrine to which I feel myself bound to subscribe.

3. The Divine Spirit carries on the work of sanctification in the Christian in connection with the revealed word of God, which is of itself adapted to effect that result in all by whom it is received as true.

That the truth of God, as revealed in scripture, should possess a natural adaptation to promote holiness in the minds of all who believe it, is only what might have been expected in the case of such a revelation to a being circumstanced as man is in his present fallen estate. As a sinner, man labours under erroneous conceptions of God's character, government, and claims, as well as of his own relations and duties to God as his creator and ruler. This is the grand source of evil with man,—the fountain of mis-placed affections, corrupt desires, and perverted conduct. His judgment being biassed, his whole moral nature rests under a corrupting and perverting influence. The light that is in him is darkness; and how great, then, must be that darkness! Now, where any being is wicked and depraved in consequence of *false views* of God and of goodness, what process is naturally adapted to the removal of his depravity but the placing before his mind of *true views* on these all-important subjects? How is dark-

ness to be dissipated but by the introduction of light? How is error to be dethroned in the mind but by the establishment of truth in that place of authority which error has usurped? And how is the sinner, who has cast out the truth concerning God from his heart, and is “walking in the light of his own fire, and in the sparks which he has kindled,”¹ to be brought from the error of his way, save by reflecting upon his understanding that light “which God hath commanded to shine out of darkness, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God?”² But this light is displayed to us in the word of truth; or, as the apostle calls it in the context of the passage just quoted, “the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God.” In this we have a perfect revelation of all divine, and all moral truth,—right views of God, of ourselves, of our relations, of our duties, of our interests, as his accountable creatures. Here, then, is the *natural* corrective of man’s wickedness, and the *appropriate* means of advancing man’s sanctification; so that, if man will but attend to what the gospel reveals, and duly receive it into his mind, one sees not any natural impediment to its producing a complete moral reformation within him.

To the possession of such adaptation to the production of holiness in the soul of man, the word of God distinctly lays claim. In proof of this I shall

¹ Isaiah i. 11.

² 2 Cor. iv. 6.

content myself with simply quoting the following passages, as a specimen of the many which bear upon this subject in scripture:—"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple: the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth. For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Wherefore, lay apart all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obey-

ing the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.”¹ The testimony of these passages in favour of the position they have been adduced to prove is too decided to require elucidation.

In connection with the word of God, thus divinely adapted to sanctify the mind, the Holy Spirit carries on his good work within us. Hence our Saviour offered for his disciples the prayer, “Sanctify them *through thy truth; thy word is truth.*” So also the apostle tells us, that God “of his own will begat us *with the word of truth*, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.” And in accordance with this, we read of God’s “giving the Gentiles the Holy Spirit, and *purifying their hearts by faith;*” and of his “opening the heart of Lydia, that she attended to

¹ Psalm xix. 7, 8; cxix. 130; John xvii. 17, 19; Eph. v. 25, 26; Col. i. 5, 6; Heb. iv. 12; James i. 21; 1 Pet. i. 22, 23; ii. 2; 1 John ii. 14.

the things that were spoken by Paul.”¹ In all these cases, the union of the divine energy with the use of the revealed word is clearly placed before us as the cause of the result produced.

In saying that the Divine Spirit operates on the mind of man *in connection with* the written word, I have intentionally made use of language somewhat vague; because, beyond the mere fact that there is such a connection, we cannot be said to know anything on this subject. Theologians, indeed, of different schools, have offered various theories as to the part which the Spirit performs and the part which is left for man to perform in the matter of human salvation; but were this the proper place, it would not be difficult to show the error of all these theories, and the illustration which they afford, of what theological theories have too often abundantly proved—the evil and danger of seeking to be wise above what is written. The caution of our Saviour against speculating on the operations of the Divine Spirit, ought to be sufficient to repress all tendency on our part to look into such high themes:—“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”² It needs but a little reflection to convince us, that

¹ John xvii. 17; James i. 18; Acts xv. 9; xvi. 14.

² John iii. 8.

the influence of the Spirit of God in the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of saints is a matter which we cannot explain. It forms a part of that mighty mystery of the union of the Divine with the human, which God is pleased in various ways to manifest to his intelligent creatures; and as such, it admits as little of explanation as do any of the other instances of the same great mystery with which we are acquainted. The union of the Divine nature with the human in the person of Christ—the union of Divine agency with human in the composition of holy scripture—the co-operation of Divine Providence with human efforts and natural causes in the regulation of the affairs of this lower universe,—are facts which all devout minds recognise, but which no sound thinkers will ever attempt to explain. As little is the union of Divine and human agency in the salvation of individuals capable of being explained by us. It is not, therefore, a subject on which we should presume to speculate. It is enough for us in this, as in these other cases, to know the *fact* that such union does exist, and that, as on the one hand the human agency would prove ineffective without the Divine, so on the other the Divine operates only in connection with the human. For the great purposes of *encouragement* and *gratitude* to which this doctrine is applied by the apostles, and in connection with which it is chiefly referred to by them, we need no more; and perhaps more

could not have been revealed to us, without our being informed of particulars, by the knowledge of which our curiosity might have been gratified, but neither of these ends in any degree promoted.

4. The ordinances of Christianity are chiefly valuable, as tending to bring before our minds the saving and sanctifying truths of our religion.

As truth, in order to produce any effect upon our understandings and hearts, must be brought into contact, so to speak, with our minds, and as man, being naturally indifferent to God's truth, is apt to allow the written record of it to lie unnoticed by him, or its statements to slip out of his memory, God has appointed certain means, for the express purpose of vividly and forcibly *obtruding*, as it were, these saving truths upon our attention. Of these, the more important are, *the ministry of the word*, and *the administration of the sacraments*, as they are called; the main design of both being to instruct, impress, and edify, by the effective application of sacred truth to the minds and consciences of men. In maintaining this position, we come into direct and manifest collision with the Anglo-catholics, who attribute little, if any efficiency to the preaching of the word, and regard the sacraments as means, not of conveying truth to the mind, but rather of communicating and preserving the presence of the Spirit of Christ in the soul. A few remarks on both these topics will bring this discussion to a close.

i. If it be of advantage to the people of God that their minds should be continually under the influence of the truths of that religion which God has revealed to them, it seems natural to suppose that the exposition, application, and enforcement of these truths, in the way of public address by competent persons, should form an important part of that instrumentality by which the great ends of God's grace towards his people are to be secured. We find, accordingly, that provision has been made for this, both under the Mosaic and the Christian dispensation. Under the former, the office of publicly teaching religious truth seems to have been shared by the prophets and the Levites;¹ and in the better days of the theocracy, care was taken by those in authority that the interests of the people in this respect should not be neglected.² The new dispensation was *announced* by the preaching of John the Baptist, who "in his exhortation preached many things unto the people;"³ it was *introduced* by the preaching of Christ, who, applying to himself the words of ancient prophecy, declared that his office was "to preach the gospel to the poor, to preach deliverance to the captives, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," and who, in fulfilment of this office, "went throughout every

¹ Comp. Isa. vi. 9, 10; Jer. xxv. 4, f.; xxxv. 15; Ezek. iii. 11; xxxiii.; Mal. ii. 7, &c. See Knobel's *Prophetismus der Hebräer*. i. th. § 15. Breslau, 1837.

² 2 Chron. xvii. 7-9; Neh. viii. 1-8.

³ Luke iii. 18.

city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom ;”¹ and it was *established* by the preaching of his apostles, who, in obedience to his command that they should “go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,” went boldly forth, “preaching everywhere,” and though met by opposition and persecution, they “ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ.”² By them the injunction was laid upon those who presided over the primitive churches, to “give attendance to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine,” and to be ever careful so to speak, as that “the church should receive edifying.”³ In obedience to this, preaching formed for many generations a prominent part of the public services of the primitive churches. The discourses delivered on these occasions seem to have consisted almost exclusively of expository remarks on Scripture, and hortatory addresses to the people ;⁴

¹ Luke iv. 18, 19; viii. 1.

² Mark xvi. 15, 20; Acts v. 42. ³ 1 Tim. iv. 13; 1 Cor. 4, 5.

⁴ Cf. Justin. Mart. Apol. i. c. 67; Blunt’s Sketch of the Church, p. 105; Eggelingk de Veterum Concionibus, cap. iii. Helmst. 1661; Rheinwald’s Kirchliche Archäologie, § 100. The description which Lactantius gives of Cyprian as a preacher makes one deeply regret that no specimen of his pulpit oratory has been preserved: “Magnam sibi gloriam ex artis oratoriae professione quæsierat . . . erat enim ingenio facili, copioso, suavi, et (quæ sermonis maxima est virtus) aperto; ut discernere nequeas, utrumne ornatior in eloquendo, an facilius in explicando, an potentior in persuadendo fuerit.” Div. Inst. lib. iv. c. i. What a noble picture of a great preacher! Is it not possible that the church would have more such men than she has, if her members were less tied by rules of man’s making than they are? In the present day, we must have none to preach but those who have been

and the specimens of them still extant, form by much the most valuable part of what has been preserved to us of the literature of the early church. "With the sacred words," exclaims Tertullian, referring to the assemblies of the Christians, "we nurture our faith, confirm our hope, establish our confidence, and in spite of adverse circumstances, strengthen the discipline of our laws, (*disciplinam præceptorum nihilominus in compulsionibus densamus*); there also we have exhortations, reproofs, and divine censure."¹ It was in the church of Rome, apparently, that this practice was first superseded. An expression, indeed, of Sozomen² would almost lead one to suspect that in that church this practice had never existed at all; but with the express testimony of Tertullian and others³ to the contrary, this cannot be believed. Neander, however, suggests,⁴ that the error of Sozomen probably arose from the cir-

regularly educated, and trained, and set apart for this purpose. The rule of the early church was, "Though he be a laic, yet if he be skilled in discourse, and of venerable deportment, let him teach, for all shall be taught of God." *Constit. Apostol. l. viii. c. 32.* Comp. also Euseb. *Hist. Eccl. vi. 19*; Philostorg. *H. E. iii. 17.*

¹ *Apologet. c. 39.*

² In giving a list of different traditions which prevailed in different churches, he says of that at Rome, οὐτε δὲ ὁ ἐπίσκοπος οὐτε ἄλλος τις ἐνθάδε ἐκ' ἐκκλησίας διδάσκει, "there, neither the bishop nor any one else teaches in the church." *H. E. vii. 19.* Cf. Valesii *Annot. in loc.*

³ Tertullian *de Pudicit. c. 13*:—"Bonus pastor et benedictus papa concionaris, et in parabola ovis capras tuas quæris, &c." Leo *Serm. 32, in Epiph. 3. § 1, &c.* See Rheinwald's *Archäologie, s. 276.*

⁴ *Kirchengeschichte, bd. ii. s. 531.*

cumstance, that in the church of Rome the sermon was gradually contracted within the narrowest limits, to make way for the growing multitude of rites which that church had begun to adopt—a suggestion which if adopted (and it is extremely probable) fixes upon the church of Rome the charge of being the first to supplant “the words of faith and of sound doctrine,” by that “bodily exercise which profiteth little.”

Of this innovation by the church of Rome upon apostolic and catholic order, the Anglo-catholics seem ambitious to be the abettors and imitators. They advocate “reserve in the communication of religious truth;” consider “the prevailing notion of bringing forward the atonement explicitly and prominently on all occasions,” as “evidently quite opposed to the teaching of scripture;” have great doubts as to “the indiscriminate distribution of Bibles and religious publications;” regard preaching as chiefly “efficacious as the means by which the all-prevailing force of *example*, [*i.e.* as afterwards explained, of the preacher’s own *self-discipline*], passes from one to another;” think “it may be necessary in a weak and languishing state” of the church, but deprecate “the modern exaltation of an instrument which scripture, to say the least, has never much recommended;” and, in short, look upon all attempts to instruct and enlighten men in the truths of Christianity, beyond the mere re-

petition of a creed, as “an indelicate exposure of religion.”¹

That these views should be entertained by men who deny to the people the right of private judgment in religious matters, is only consistent. It is a fair and legitimate carrying out of their fundamental principle of treating men as mere machines, who are to be *made* religious by something done to them by others, not to *become* religious by the influence of truth received by them into their understandings, and incorporated with the substance of their thoughts. But that any man should venture to represent this as a course sanctioned by the New Testament, or to affirm that the opposite course is one “not much recommended” in the Bible, can be accounted for only on the supposition, that the writer has practised on himself the discipline he recommends to others, and in his dread of the “indiscriminate” perusal of Scripture, has too carefully abstained from perusing it at all. If there be one thing more evident than another in the history of our Lord and his apostles, it is the stress they laid on the free and unreserved communication of truth to the minds of men, as the main instrument of effecting men’s salvation. Not to repeat passages already quoted, it needs only to cast the eye over the following to be convinced of this. “Go ye and

¹ Tract No. 80, p. 73, 69, 71; No. 37, p. 75.

teach all nations. . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.—They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.—I kept nothing back that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and to the Greeks repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Wherefore I take you to record this day that I am free from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare to you all the counsel of God.—And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ.—So much as in me is I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also; for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek, for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith.—How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?—I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.—We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery,

even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory.—Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel.—Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I have preached unto you; . . . for I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures,¹ and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, &c.—God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.—I am ordained a preacher and an apostle (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity. A bishop must be apt to teach.—Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour; especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.—Preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.—Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs of the hope of eternal life. This is a

¹ And yet, according to the author of Tract No. 80, “to bring forward the atonement explicitly is opposed to the teaching of scripture!” Is it to ignorance, forgetfulness, or “the system of reserve,” that this strange assertion is to be attributed.

faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”¹

It needs but a glance over these passages to satisfy any one that the apostolic system, as described in them, stands in direct contrast with “the church system,” as it is advocated by the author of the Tract above quoted. The latter system is one of *reserve*, the former is one that “keeps nothing back that is profitable,” but announces *publicly* “all the counsel of God.” In the one we see the atonement of Christ thrown into the background; in the other, we find it placed in a position of all-absorbing interest, as the only thing comparatively deemed worthy of being known or proclaimed. In the church system preaching is treated as a weak and beggarly instrument, fitted only for a low and languishing state of the church; in the apostolic system it is held forth as that for which the apostles themselves were ordained,—as that which bishops are to regard as one of their chief duties,—as that by which the power of God, in the salvation of men, is mainly displayed,—and as that which brings peculiar honour upon all by whom it is faithfully performed. The advocates of the church system talk with trembling apprehen-

¹ Matt. xxviii. 10; Acts viii. 4, 5; xx. 20, 27; xxviii. 30, 31; Rom. i. 15—17; x. 14; 1 Cor. ii. 2, 7; ix. 16; xv. 1—4; Gal. vi. 14; 1 Tim. ii. 7; iii. 2; v. 17; 2 Tim. iv. 2; Tit. iii. 5—8.

sion of "the indelicate exposure of religion" by the public exposition of the peculiar doctrines of Christianity; the apostle, after enumerating these doctrines, solemnly commands that these "*be affirmed constantly,*" as "*good and profitable unto men.*" Both systems may, through the influence of circumstances, be made to yield fruits different from those which might have been expected, but the natural tendency manifestly of the one is to cramp man's spiritual powers, to dwarf his intellectual energies, and to keep him in a state of slavish dependence upon his religious instructors, while that of the other is to awaken man to a sense of his own dignity as a being endowed by God with intelligence, to remind him that he is one for whose intellectual capacities his Creator has consulted in sending him a message adapted to enlighten and expand his mind, and thus, by quickening within him the sense of responsibility, to prepare him the more surely for that place where he "shall know even as he is known," and where, in the combination of the highest intellectual capacity with the purest moral tendency, he shall find that perfection for which our race was originally destined.

ii. The design of the catholics in depreciating the study of the truths of Christianity as a mean of advancing the salvation of men is, that they may the more highly exalt in this respect the power of the sacraments. According to the writer last quoted, "the sacraments realize the doctrine [of the atone-

ment] in a way that no human system can do ; for we believe," he adds, " that a divine power, and the blessings of the atonement especially, are after some transcendental manner present in these sacraments, according to the express promise of our Lord. . . . It is always the case with the church, that it has considered the sacraments as certain veils of the Divine presence, being not only signs and tokens, but vehicles and conveyances, as it were, of divine gifts."¹ It seems somewhat strange that the church should have always considered the same thing as at once a *veil*, a *vehicle*, and a *token* ; but passing this, the language of the above extract is sufficiently intelligible. It is plainly designed to advocate the idea, that men are to be prepared for heaven, not by being brought under the influence of saving and sanctifying truth, but by the direct energy, the *opus operatum* of the sacraments, carrying to the mind of man the presence and the power of God.

This view of the nature and use of the sacraments I have already examined in its relation to *Baptism* ; it remains that I should offer a few remarks upon it in its relation to the *Lord's supper*.

The writer just quoted tells us, that the power he ascribes to the sacraments is " according to the express promise of our Lord." To what promise he refers we are not informed ; and so far as regards

¹ Tract 87, p. 89.

the subject of our present inquiry, the Lord's supper, it doubtless will greatly puzzle any reader of the New Testament to guess what passage can have been present to his mind when he wrote these words. Whether we turn to the account given of the institution of this ordinance in the Gospels,¹ or to that contained in the words of Paul to the Corinthians,² we alike perceive the prominence assigned to the *commemorative* purpose which it is intended to serve. "Do this," said Christ, "*in remembrance* of me." "As often as ye eat this bread," said Paul, "and drink this cup, *ye do shew*³ the Lord's death till he come." On the other hand, there is not the slightest intimation, of a direct kind, in any of these passages, that has even the appearance of favouring the notion, that the ordinance is intended to be a "vehicle or conveyance of divine gifts." From all this, the obvious inference is, that the benefit of this institution is enjoyed by us in consequence of its bringing vividly and forcibly before the mind the great fundamental truths of our religion—the incarnation of Deity in the person of Jesus Christ, and the remission of our sins through the death which, as incarnate Deity, Christ endured.

On what, then, do catholics found their doctrine

¹ Matt. xxvi. 26-30; Mark xiv. 22-26; Luke xxii. 19, 20.

² 2 Cor. xi. 23-26.

³ καταγγίλλετε—"cum laude et gratiarum actione celebratis mortem Christi."—Krause Annot. in loc.

of the direct saving efficacy of this ordinance? This question will be best answered by the following extract from one of the Tracts for the Times:—"The Eucharist, according to them, [the early Christians], consisted of two parts, a 'commemorative sacrifice,' and a 'communion,' or communication, the former obtaining remission of sins for the church; the communion, 'the strengthening and refreshing of the soul,' although inasmuch as it united the believer with Christ, it indirectly conveyed remission of sins too. The communion was (to use a modern phrase) the feast upon the sacrifice thus offered."¹ These views, alleged to be those of the early Christians, the Tractators embrace as their own. They regard the Lord's supper as a sacrifice for the remission of sins, and the partaking of it as an indirect source of actual forgiveness to the communicant, though, be it observed, this latter is not *necessary* to the realization of the blessing of remission. This is obtained "for the church" at large, and that, apparently, whether on earth or in the unseen state; for in the same tract we are told, that "this sacrifice offered by the church on earth for the whole church, conveys to that portion of it which has passed into the unseen world such benefits of Christ's death as (their conflicts over, and they in rest) are still applicable to them," (p. 7.) In connection with this we must

¹ Tract, No. 81, p. 6.

take their doctrine of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the eucharistic elements. What they teach on this head, indeed, it is not very easy to determine; for what between their anxiety to maintain the real presence on the one hand, and their dread of using words that would fix upon them the advocacy of transubstantiation on the other, their statements are, to common understandings, somewhat impenetrable. The presence of Christ's body and blood, we are told, in the eucharist, is "real, but not local;" it is "superlocal;" it is "a sacramental presence;" it is a "a presence in spirit;" it is effected "by the agency of the Holy Ghost in and by the sacrament;" and yet there is "a real change in the sacred elements" after consecration, and it is "literally true," that "the consecrated bread is Christ's body."¹ Out of this jargon of words what can we infer, but that the writers mean more than they like to state, and that if it were not for fear of going beyond the point of safety, they would boldly avow the doctrine of transubstantiation. What gives strength to this inference, is the language of Dr Pusey, already cited in this volume, in which he boasts, that his church is "the only one in this realm which has a right to be quite sure that she has the Lord's body to give to his people." If these words have any meaning, it is surely all derived

² See Tract, No. 90, § 8, *passim*. Pusey's Letter to the Bishop of Oxford, p. 125, ff.

from the assumption by the writer of the truth of the doctrine of transubstantiation.

As, however, this doctrine is in words repudiated by the Anglo-catholics, I shall not occupy space by repeating the often-urged and never-refuted arguments against it. In the following remarks I shall proceed upon their own statement of their views concerning the eucharist, confining myself to a few strictures on the doctrine above laid down, that that ordinance is a sacrifice for the remission of the sins of the church, which derives its value from the spiritual presence in it of the body and blood of Christ, and by partaking of which individuals procure for themselves spiritual gifts. Of such a doctrine what can we say, but that it is as absurd as it is unscriptural?

1. What can be meant by the real presence of a body which yet is not present either locally or in substance, but only in spirit? Erroneous as is the popish doctrine of transubstantiation, it is nevertheless intelligible. One knows what is *meant* by the affirmation, that the substance of the bread and wine is changed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ; but what idea to attach to the assertion, that a *body* is present in *spirit*, it is impossible even to conjecture. That the human body of our Lord is in heaven, and that his Spirit is present with his people in the observance of his ordinances, are intelligible and clearly revealed truths; but to tell us

that the body of Christ is really present in the eucharist, and yet only spiritually present, is as plain a piece of absurdity as ever was penned. It was well to describe this presence as being "after a transcendental manner;" it certainly utterly transcends reason and common sense, as well as scripture.

2. What propriety is there in calling that a sacrifice where nothing is sacrificed? The essence of a sacrifice, properly so called, lies in the shedding of the blood of a victim; and, as the apostle reminds us, where there is no shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins.¹ The absence, therefore, of all this from the eucharist renders it preposterous to speak of it as a sacrifice. As the memorial of the death of Christ, the observance of it is the *commemoration* of a sacrifice; but this no more makes it a sacrifice in itself, than the keeping of the 30th of January by the Church of England in memory of the execution of Charles I. makes the service of that day what they call a "martyrdom." It will serve no purpose, in reply to this, to say, that the apostles frequently speak of the services of Christians as "sacrifices;" for in all such cases the word is used *metaphorically*, to denote something which is offered to God as an expression of devotion and grateful service to him, never in the sense in which

¹ Heb. ix. 22.

the catholics apply it to the eucharist, as that which is presented for the remission of sins.

3. The idea, that by "consecration" some change is effected upon the elements in the eucharist, is utterly unsupported by scripture. The passage commonly adduced in defence of it is that in which Paul says, "the cup of blessing which we bless, &c.,"¹ where the words "we bless," are supposed to mean "we consecrate." Now, even admitting this explanation of Paul's words, they furnish but a poor support for the doctrine which catholics attempt to build upon them; for "to consecrate" does not surely mean "to transform by consecration," nor does it follow that the consecration is anything more than the setting apart of common wine to a special and sacred use. But that this is a correct view of the apostle's language, is extremely doubtful. I cannot, indeed, agree with those who would explain the "blessing" of which Paul speaks as a blessing of God, and who understand his words as if they stood, "the cup of blessing for which we give thanks;" as such an interpretation is arbitrary and unjustifiable by any usage of the words in question. But without resorting to this forced explanation, we have only to take the phrase in its usual meaning in the New Testament, in order to affix to the apostle's words a sense at once simple and appropriate. The phrase

¹ 1 Cor. x. 16.

“to bless,” when used of a person, means, to invoke God’s favour upon him; and so here, when used of the cup, it means to invoke God’s blessing upon it, as an instrument of spiritual advantage to the communicant; in other words, to ask his blessing upon the partaking of it, that so it may, as a memorial of Christ’s death, minister to the worshippers that instruction and comfort which it is designed to convey.

4. The scripture assures us, that the sacrifice of Christ has been offered once for all, and that now there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.¹ But with this statement the assertion, that in the eucharist there is a sacrifice for the remission of sins, which is to be continually repeated till the end of the world, comes directly into collision. If Christ’s sacrifice be sufficient for the forgiveness of the sins of men, why another sacrifice for the same purpose? Why an incessant repetition of this? Is not the asserting of such a doctrine directly to dishonour Christ, and depreciate the merits of his work, as well as to discredit his word? To this it may be replied, that to regard the eucharist as a sacrifice, no more tends to derogate from the honour due to Christ, than did the offering of sacrifice by the ancient Jews; for as the latter were prophetic of his work, so is the former designed to be commemorative of his work. To this I answer in the *first*

¹ Heb. x. 12, 26.

place, that before the sacrificial character of the eucharist can be put upon the same footing with that of the Jewish offerings, it must be established by the same clear and indubitable authority from the word of God; for as sacrifice is altogether a thing of Divine appointment, it is only by an appeal to the express word of God, that the sacrificial character of any institute in his religion can be established. But *secondly*, catholics ascribe a great deal more to the eucharistic sacrifice, as they term it, than belonged to any of the ancient Jewish sacrifices. The latter were simply *typical*; *i. e.*, they pointed the mind of the worshipper to the great sacrifice of atonement which was in due time to be offered by Christ. In themselves they had no saving virtue; "the blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sins;" but they were aids to the faith and hope of those who looked for the coming of Him on whom the iniquity of men was to be placed, and by whose stripes they were to be healed. They were thus simply *didactic* ordinances, and on this account were perfectly compatible with the sole sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ. But it is not in this light that the eucharist is viewed by the catholics. By them it is held to be not commemorative simply of Christ's sacrifice, but to possess power in itself of procuring for the church the remission of sins. It thus ceases to be merely didactic, and becomes propitiatory; and being in this way placed on a footing of equality

with the sacrifice of Christ, it cannot but cast the latter into the shade. It is in vain to tell men in words, that Christ's death is the all-sufficient sacrifice for sins, when they are invited, day after day, to witness another sacrifice to which equal virtue is ascribed. That which is near, and strikes the senses, is sure to supersede that which is remote and invisible; a sacrifice beheld by faith can never exercise the same influence over our feelings with one to which we are taught to ascribe equal value, and which is consummated before our eyes; and hence the invariable and necessary consequence of catholic views of the eucharist, has been to put that ordinance in the place of Christ, and lead men to offer to the memorials of his death that honour which is due only to himself. What a master-piece of Satan's craft, thus to make what Christ designed to be a perpetual remembrancer of himself to his people, the means of hiding him from the view of men, and changing his spiritual worship into a vulgar and debasing idolatry!

5. As to the opinion that the observance of the Lord's supper is the medium of conveying to us directly spiritual gifts, it seems to rest chiefly on the words of Paul, where he calls the cup "the communion of the blood," and the bread "the communion of the body of Christ."¹ These words, it is admit-

¹ 1 Cor. x. 16.

ted, present a difficulty not to be despised in the way of anti-catholic views of this ordinance; by way of removing which, I submit the following remarks:—

As the apostle is explaining in this passage not the nature of the Lord's supper so much as the fellowship and communion of Christians, we must take care to keep this in view in interpreting his words. Now, of this fellowship, the Lord's supper affords a symbolical representation; "for," reasons the apostle, "[as there is] one bread, [so] we being many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread." His argument here I take to be this:—"We Christians are all one, and this is shown in the great ceremony of our religion, where we all partake of the same bread and the same wine. But as this cannot *constitute* us one, though it may *exhibit* our oneness, there must be something else on which both the reality and the symbol of our unity rest. This is found in the great facts which this ordinance commemorates—the shed blood and broken body of Christ. By spiritually partaking of these, we become incorporated with Christ, and so with one another in him." Now, if this be the apostle's argument, his words in the 16th verse must be understood not as stating the benefits which flow to Christians from partaking of the Lord's supper, but as describing the *signification* of that ordinance in its relation to the communicants. It is to them the symbol of their common participation of the body and blood of Christ—of

their real union and fellowship with him. With this interpretation, the usage of the word rendered *communion* (κοινωνία) perfectly accords; comp. Gal. ii. 9; Phil. i. 5; ii. 1, &c. The only philological difficulty arises from taking the substantive verb *is* in the sense of *signifies*, and paraphrasing it by the words “is a symbol of;” but no great stress can be laid upon this, except by those who contend that our Lord’s words, “this is my body,” employed in instituting this ordinance, involve the doctrine of the real presence of Christ’s body in the bread. To such it is sufficient to reply, that the verb in question is often used, both in scripture and in common conversation, in the sense above affixed to it;¹ and that to be consistent, they should, upon the same principle which they would apply here, maintain that when our Lord says, “this cup is the new covenant in my blood,”² he means that the wine in the cup was in itself the covenant, and not merely the sign or token of it.

It thus appears that the doctrine of the catholics regarding the Lord’s supper is as untenable as their doctrine concerning baptism, if not more so. We return with confidence to the simple and plain doctrine of scripture upon the subject, doctrine which

¹ Comp. such passages as “*I am* the vine;” “*I am* the door;” “*The field is* the world;” “*That rock was* Christ,” &c., or such colloquial expressions, “*That bust is* Demosthenes,” “*This portrait is* my father,” &c.

² Luke xx. 20.

is not more intelligible than it is profitable and comforting. Receiving this ordinance as designed to commemorate the dying love of Christ, we observe it in faith and love towards him, seeking to realise our fellowship with him, and proclaiming to all who witness our observance, our devotion to him, and dependence upon him, as our only Saviour. Our thoughts are thus drawn towards him; our faith in him is confirmed; our love to him is strengthened; our anticipations of his "coming the second time without sin unto salvation" are enlivened; and we rise from the hallowed service as those whose hunger has been appeased at "a feast of fat things," and who, having partaken of "wines upon the lees," are as strong men rejoicing to pursue their course.

In this way the ordinances of Christianity become means of grace to the believer. They work sanctification within him by bringing before his mind the great truths of his religion, and when combined with the reading and hearing of the word of God, and earnest persevering prayer for the Holy Spirit, they form the only efficient means of preserving him in the Christian course, and preparing him for the heavenly rest. Besides these, it is true, there are other means which he must not neglect, such as mortifying the evil passions of his carnal nature, performing deeds of charity and beneficence, enjoying the society of Christian brethren, and instruct-

ing the ignorant in the truths of salvation. But important as these are in themselves, they can, as means of his own spiritual advancement, only have a secondary place assigned to them; for it is only as they tend to keep the word of God before his mind, and impress it upon his heart, that they can operate beneficially upon his soul. Apart from this, they may only generate spiritual pride, and so cause what had otherwise tended to the furtherance of his salvation an occasion of his falling.

When, for the views of the Christian life which scripture maintains, and which in this chapter I have sought to advocate, are substituted those of the Anglo-catholics, the consequences are for the most part deplorable. In one class of minds their tendency is to produce and foster a *morbid asceticism*, leading the individual to withdraw himself from all the social enjoyments and useful activities of life,—to mope over his sins and short-comings in sullen despair,—to act the part of a self-tormentor and at the same time a bitter censor of others,—to sorrow over the goodness of God to him, as if every blessing which Providence has poured into his lot were a clog and fetter on his spiritual progress,—and, in his disordered zeal, to do his endeavour, as it were, that this world, which God has done so much to bless, should become a mere spiritual prison-house,—a weary scene of penance, anxiety, and remorse. In minds of another cast, these views degenerate into

superstition, producing a tendency to rely upon rites and ceremonies, priestly offices and personal services, for acceptance with God, and at once darkening the reason and searing the conscience of men. And with the great mass of the people the result of the reception of these views would be a cold dead *formalism*, that contents itself with the name and shadow of religion, and neither knows nor cares for its reality.

Associated with the other parts of the church system, these views of the Christian life tend, moreover, to endanger the true liberties of the church of Christ. By the state of dependence upon the offices of the clergy into which they bring the people, they contribute largely to the consolidating and extending of the empire of priestcraft—a result to which the whole system of catholicism points. I do not mean to charge this upon the advocates of that system in England, as the *purpose* and *intention* of their efforts; but that such is the tendency of the opinions they propagate, appears to me indubitable. However the church system may be modified, it tends to aggrandize the power of the clergy, at the expense of the intelligence, the liberties, and the happiness of the community. Its denial of the right of private judgment—its doctrine of an outward visible corporation, called the universal church, from which Christianity descends by means of clerical rites to the individuals who are ingrafted

into it—its constituting of the clergy as such into a separate and superior order of Christians—its investing of them with mystic authority transmitted in direct line from Christ himself—its ascription to the sacraments as administered by them of an awful sanctity and mysterious saving virtue—and its allotting to the people a gloomy penitential path, as that through which alone they can pass to heaven, and all departures from which must be atoned for by such sacrifices as only the priest can offer; all tend to elevate the clergy to undue authority, to invest them with dangerous power, and to prostrate the community in grovelling superstition at their feet.

In the train of this follows the destruction of true vital godliness among the people. Religion to be effective must be real; to be real it must be personal; to be personal it must be based upon the convictions of the individual's own mind, and the feelings of his own heart. Vicarious religion—that religion which rests upon the offices of another, and the substance of which may be summed up in the one precept, “Obey the church,” *i. e.* “Do as your priest commands you,”—this sort of religion is, in the estimation both of reason and scripture, utterly worthless. If a man have not felt himself a guilty sinner in the sight of God—if he have not seen the sufficiency and the suitableness of the salvation which is in Christ—and if he have not sincerely and gratefully betaken himself to the Saviour, and ac-

cepted God's offer of forgiveness through him; it matters not though every rite which priests administer have been observed by him; he is still in his sins, and if he continue in this state until the term of his earthly life expires, he must perish for ever. On the other hand, if a man, believing God to be true, and receiving his offer of pardon through his Son, do with a hearty desire present unto God such a prayer as that of the publican for mercy, it matters not though he never heard a priestly benediction, nor submitted to a priestly rite; the great High Priest himself will cleanse him from his sins, and make him a member of that royal and priestly company which he has washed in his own blood. This, let men cavil as they please,—this is God's truth, and by this shall the church of God be established.

JAM NUNC, QUAE NUMERAS TOT TIBI VINDICES,
 EFFER SIDEREUM, RELIGIO, CAPUT;
 QUOT SUNT MOTA TIBI PRÆLIA, NOBILES
 TOT NECTIS TIBI LAUREAS.

Hymn. Eccles. in Brev. Paris.

APPENDIX.



APPENDIX.

NOTE A, p. 5.

MEANING OF THE TITLE, "ANGEL OF THE CHURCH," AS
USED IN REV. ii. and iii.

"Upon the whole of this so long and so zealously agitated question, [the question of the origin of Episcopacy], I have been led to think that the early course of facts was in this way. In the first churches, two or more of the most suitable members were elected by the church under the direction of an apostle or an evangelist, such as Timothy and Titus, or of their first Christian teacher, whatever rank he might hold, (see Acts xi. 29; 3 John 5, 6, 7); and were then ordained by prayer, 'with the laying on of the hands of the *presbytery*,' consisting of the apostle or evangelist, and those pastors who could join in the act. These, therefore, were the spiritual guides, teachers, presidents, or shepherds (pastors) of the community, called *elders* (presbyters) from their age, or rather qualities of mind equivalent to the wisdom and experience of pious age, and *overseers* (bishops) from their actual office. In process of time, and by the influence of circumstances very likely to occur, one of these, the most distinguished for talents and energy, became the head, perpetual president, or moderator. The earliest indication, *perhaps*, of this, we find in the address of each of the

Apocalyptic epistles ‘to the angel of —,’ &c. Perhaps it was in that district, the Proconsular Asia, that this state of affairs was developed, and became definitely established; and as the apostle John, in extreme old age, resided at Ephesus, he gave it his approbation, as a plan adapted to preclude ambitious feelings or usurped superiority.”—*Smith’s Letter to the Rev. S. Lee, D.D., &c.*, p. 56.

The opinion respecting the meaning of the phrase, “Angel of the Church,” which my very learned and much venerated friend, Dr Smith, adduces as *probable* in the above extract, I have ventured in the passage to which this note refers to assume as *true*. My reason is, that after giving the subject my best attention, I can come to no other conclusion regarding it. Passing over some interpretations of this phrase which seem not worthy of being noticed, such as that by “angel” is meant the guardian angel of each church, or that this title is used to designate the door-keeper or messenger of the church, there are five others which have been advanced, and require consideration.

1. We have the high Episcopal view of it, according to which the angels of these churches were the bishops to whom alone were entrusted the control and regulation of their affairs. On this it is enough to remark, *1st*, That as the whole evidence of the rest of the New Testament goes to show that no such officer as a bishop, in the modern sense of the term, existed in the early churches, it is altogether incompetent for us to *assume* the existence of such an office in order to explain an obscure and difficult expression in this one instance; and, *2dly*, It is clear, both from the tenor of the epistles themselves, and especially from the command of Christ, that they were to be sent unto the *churches*, the ἐκκλησίαι, or assemblies of the brethren, (Apoc. i. 11), a fact which is quite incompatible with the high Episcopal theory; for where the jurisdiction of a diocesan is supposed, all *popular* influence in the management of affairs is put out of the question.

2. The strict Presbyterian interpretation of the phrase in question is, that it means the consistory of elders in each congregation, viewed as one body, and so personified. What seems to me fatal to this theory is, that it is not usual to address epistles to mere personifications; and that had the parties to whom these Apocalyptic epistles were sent been the body of elders in each congregation, the title "Presbytery," or some analogous appellation, would have been employed. Besides, the use of the plural, in such expressions as the following, is opposed to this theory,—“Behold, the devil shall cast *some from among you* (ἐκ ὑμῶν) into prison, that *ye* may be tried;” “All the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and the hearts, and I will give to *each of you* according to your works.” Language such as this is not certainly appropriate when addressed to an individual or a quasi-individual, and suits much better with the supposition, that the epistle of which it forms a part was addressed to a community.

3. Next in order is what may be called the ultra-congregationalist theory, which supposes that the word “angel” is here used as a symbolical expression for the whole church. Unhappily for this theory, it is not only open to the same objection as the last, but it is expressly contradicted by the interpretation which John himself tells us he received from Christ of the mystery of the seven stars which he saw in his right hand, and of the seven lamps of gold. “The lamps, said he, are the churches, and the stars are the angels of the churches;” plainly teaching, that between the churches and the angels there was a distinction, so that the one could not be the symbol of the other.

4. I notice, fourthly, another view held by many congregationalists on this subject, viz. that at the time John wrote the Apocalypse, a plurality of pastors had ceased in the churches; that there was now in each of these societies only one pastor, and that to him the letter intended

for his church was addressed, that he might lay it before them, and, as in duty bound, urge its contents on their notice. I have no objection to this view, except the stubborn one, that it is opposed to facts. Whatever date we assign to the Apocalypse, provided we admit it to be the work of John, it must have been written long before the time when a plurality of pastors ceased in the churches. For more than a century after Christ had arisen, this arrangement continued; and it remains with those who adopt this theory, to prove that these seven churches formed an exception to the general rule. That two of them at least did not, we are pretty certain from documents that yet remain. Previous to the writing of the Apocalypse, in the time of Paul, the church at Ephesus had a plurality of elders, as we learn from the New Testament; and subsequent to the writing of the Apocalypse we know that it still had such a plurality, from the letter addressed to it by Ignatius, which is still extant. From a letter of the same Father to the Smyrnæans, we know that they also had a plurality of elders in the beginning of the second century. With these facts before us, it would be sacrificing too much to a favourite theory to suppose, that just at the time when the Apocalypse was written, these churches, for no assignable reason, had been placed under the charge of a single pastor. In regard to them, then, I think it must be admitted by all, that the angel of the church was not an individual who held alone the office of pastor among them; and if this is not the sense of the term in relation to these churches, it cannot be the sense of it in relation to any of the others.

5. There remains only the opinion, that by the angel of the church, is designated the president of the body of pastors,—the *presbuterion*,—through whom the epistle was sent to the church, to be by him laid before them. This has the advantage of being at once the most obvious view of the case, and of being the only one on which we can harmonize the actual statements of the passages. It has

also strongly in its favour the circumstance, that in the Jewish synagogues, after the model of which the first Christian churches were unquestionably formed, there was an officer, who bore the title of *Sheliach Tsibbor*, i. e., angel or messenger of the assembly, and whose duty it was to perform exactly those functions which, as we learn from a passage in the Apology of Justin Martyr, the presidents of the Christian churches performed in them.¹

We thus arrive at the conclusion, that in all probability, before the close of the apostolic age, there was an officer appointed in each church, who was the president of the ordinary pastors, and the general bishop of the body.

NOTE B, p. 17.

DR ARNOLD ON ANGLO-CATHOLICISM.

In a volume of sermons, published some time before his death, the late Dr Arnold of Rugby,—a man whom it would be superfluous to praise, but whose too early loss the friends of learning and liberty cannot cease to deplore,—gives a sketch of the rise and progress of the Oxford school, which he follows up with the following graphic outline of their peculiar system:—

“ ‘The sacraments, and not preaching, are the sources of divine grace.’ So it is said in the advertisement prefixed to the first volume of the Tracts for the Times, in exact conformity with the preamble to the resolutions, which I have already quoted. But the only security for the efficacy of the sacraments is the apostolical commission of the bishops, and under them, of the presbyters of the church. So it is said in the preamble to the resolutions. These two doctrines are the foundation of the

¹ Comp. Lightfoot in loc. Opp. Lat. ii. 119. Just. M., Apol. i. c. 67.

whole system. God's grace and our salvation come to us principally through the virtue of the sacraments; the virtue of the sacraments depends on the apostolical succession of those who administer them. The clergy, therefore, thus holding in their hands the most precious gifts of the church, acquire naturally the title of the church itself; the church, as possessed of so mysterious a virtue, as to communicate to the only means of salvation their saving efficacy, becomes at once an object of the deepest reverence. What wonder if to a body endowed with so transcendent a gift, there should be given also the spirit of wisdom, to discern all truth; so that the solemn voice of the church in its creeds, and in the decrees of its general councils, must be received as the voice of God himself. Nor can such a body be supposed to have commended any practices or states of life which are not really excellent, and the duty either of all Christians, or of those, at least, who would follow the most excellent way. Fasting, therefore, and the state of celibacy, are the one a Christian obligation, the other a Christian perfection. Again, being members of a body so exalted, and receiving our very salvation in a way altogether above reason, we must be cautious how we either trust to our individual conscience, rather than to the command of the church, or how we venture to exercise our reason at all in judging of what the church teaches: childlike faith and childlike obedience are the dispositions which God most loves. What, then, are they who are not of the church, who do not receive the sacraments from those who can alone give them their virtue? Surely they are aliens from God, they cannot claim his covenanted mercies; and the goodness which may be apparent in them, may not be a real goodness. God may see that it is false, though to us it appear sincere; but it is certain that they do not possess the only appointed means of salvation; and therefore we must consider their state as dangerous, although we may not venture to condemn them."—*Christian Life, &c.*, Pref. p. xv.

NOTE C, p. 20.

DR HOOK ON THE EVANGELICAL CLERGY OF THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND.

In what light the evangelical portion of the Anglican clergy are viewed by the advocates of catholicism, the following remarks by one who writes as a peace-maker will show. After quoting several passages from the articles, homilies, and catechisms of the English church, in order to show that sacramental salvation is the doctrine of that church, the writer proceeds thus:—"Now these expressions are so strong, that many pious and well-meaning men have regarded them as sufficient to justify their secession from our communion; while more violent controversialists have not hesitated to denounce the English Church for retaining them as semi-popish, if not absolutely papistical. They both censure our baptismal office and affirm that our doctrine of the eucharist differs little, if at all, from the transubstantiation of the Romanist, or, at all events, from the consubstantiation of the Lutheran,—dogmas equally unphilosophical and unscriptural. The English churchman, then, is here placed on the defensive, and the defence is conducted in two ways. Some persons admit (without questioning) the accuracy of our opponents in their notions of sacramental efficacy; and, seeing the manifest and glaring inconsistency between our services and those notions, regret that our reformers retained the expressions objected to, but at the same time contend, that they do not of necessity bear the construction which is generally placed on them, but admit of a restricted meaning, more conformable with the view of the objector. Others there are who receive these expressions in all the simplicity and fulness of their meaning, and, thinking that they are amply borne out by scripture, maintain that the English Reformers, in the retention of

them, used a wise discretion, and acted consistently on those catholic principles to which they professed to adhere. These assume the offensive against our common objectors, and show, that in confounding, as do the foreign reformers, regeneration with renovation,—a change of spiritual state, circumstances, and relations, and an election to grace, with a subsequent change of disposition, heart, and temper,—the objectors are themselves in error; and are equally unscriptural in the very low notions they entertain of the grace conveyed to the faithful in the other sacrament. And thus, since no one but a man equally void of integrity, and regardless of the sanctity of an oath, would presume to alter our baptismal office or the liturgy, to make them square with his private views; the only question among churchmen is whether the words we use in common will, or will not, by fair construction, bear the interpretation which some persons put upon them. If, after fair discussion, it is found they cannot,—of course, those who think that the expressions used in our offices are anti-scriptural, will quit our communion, and the discussion will then be one relating to principle, and the debate will be as to the meaning of the words of scripture.”—*Hook's Call to Union on the Principles of the English Reformation*, pp. 24, 25.

NOTE D, p. 31.

VINCENT'S TEST OF TRUTH.

As the “golden rule,” as it has been called, of Vincent of Lerins, occupies a very prominent place in the present controversy, it may not be altogether useless to present it to my readers in the author's own words, as these are given in the English translation.

“I have been at great pains (says Vincent) and often

made it my particular business to consult very many persons of the highest rank for piety and learning, about a certain general rule to distinguish the true catholic faith from the depravations of heresy; and, after repeated inquiries, the sum of all their answers amounted to this, That if I, or any other Christian, would discover the artifice of growing heretics, and keep out of their snares, and continue perfectly sound in the right faith, the way, by God's grace, is to secure it upon these two foundations: First, upon the authority of Holy Scripture; and after that, upon the tradition of the catholic church. But here, perhaps, a man may ask this question, Since the canon of the scripture is complete, and more than sufficient in every respect, what need is there for adding the sense of the catholic church to such a perfect rule? To which question I answer, that there is good reason for such addition; because the sacred scriptures having a sublime sense, all understandings cannot reach it alike; but one expounds the divine oracles after this manner, and another after that, insomuch that there are almost as many opinions about the true meaning as there are expositors. For instance, Novatianus interprets one way, Photinus another, Sabellius another, Donatus another, Arius, Eusebius, Macedonius another, Apollinaris, Priscillianus another, Jovinianus, Pelagius, Celestius another, and, in fine, Nestorius another. And, therefore, under so great difficulties, in such a perplexity of various error, I hold it extremely necessary to apply the sense of the catholic church to the scriptures, as a rule to a line, and as the clue to conduct us in this labyrinth of opinions. And for us who are in the bosom of the catholic church, it ought to be our first and principal care to choose such doctrines as we find to have been believed in all places, at all times, and by all the faithful. For there is nothing truly and properly catholic (as the word sufficiently declares) but what truly and fully comprehends all these. And we are thus catholic when we follow universality, an-

tiquity, and unanimous consent; but we follow universality, when we profess that only to be the true faith which is professed by the church all the world over; in like manner, we are followers of antiquity, when we religiously adhere to that sense of scripture which manifestly obtained among the holy Fathers, our predecessors; and, lastly, we follow consent, when we embrace the definitions and opinions of almost all, if not all, the bishops and teachers in the ancient church."

On this much boasted rule, I shall content myself here with remarking, that viewing it as a test of truth, two-thirds of it are plainly superfluous. It is surely enough to prove our doctrine true, that it be shown that it has *always* been taught in the Christian church. To prove this, is to prove that it was taught by the apostles, who, in the first age, were the *only* teachers of Christianity; in other words, to show that it is in accordance with scripture, which contains the only authentic record of what was taught in the church by the apostles. After this, what more can be requisite to prove the doctrine true and divine? If it be shown from their own records that a certain doctrine was taught by the apostles, what additional evidence of its truth can be furnished by showing that it *continued* to be taught for some centuries after they were dead? Can the stream rise higher than the fountain? Can the repetition by uninspired men of certain doctrines which they have derived from men who were inspired, add any thing to the authority of these doctrines?

I cannot but regard those who accept this rule of Vincentius as placing themselves thereby in a dilemma. For, either it is possible to prove all the doctrines of Christianity directly from scripture, or it is not. If it is not, how can any doctrine be shown to have been *always* taught in the church? If it be, where is the necessity of calling in the aid of tradition to prove any doctrine further?

NOTE E, p. 31.

DEFERENCE TO TRADITION ON THE PART OF THE
ENGLISH REFORMERS AND OTHERS.

The following extracts will clearly show that the fathers of the English reformation viewed tradition in much the same light as the Oxford Tractators. In the rules laid down for the conference with the Romish priests and Jesuits, the following injunctions appear:—

“ If they should show any ground of Scripture, and wrest it to their sense, let it be showed by the interpretation of the old doctors, such as were before Gregory I. For that in his time began the first claim of the supremacy by the patriarch of Constantinople, and shortly after was usurped by the bishop of Rome, the first founder of the papacy and supremacy of that see, by the authority of Phocas, the traitor and murderer of his Lord.

“ And as for the testimony of the later doctors, if they bring any, let them refuse them; for that the most part of the writers of that time, and after, yielded to the authority of the Emperor and the bishop of Rome.

“ If they can show no doctor that agreed with them in their said opinion before that time, then to conclude that they have no succession in that doctrine from the time of the apostles, and above 400 years after, (when doctrine and religion were most pure.) For that they can show no predecessor whom they might succeed in the same. *Quod primum verum. Tertull.*

“ If they allege any doctor of that antiquity, then to view the place; and to seek the true meaning *ex præcedentibus et consequentibus*; or of other places out of the same doctor. And to oppose other doctors likewise writing of the same matter, in case the sentence of the said

old doctor shall seem to make against us.”—*Strype's Whitgift*, vol. i. p. 197.

Jewel's Apology contains many passages strongly to the same effect. Take the following, in which he speaks not only for himself but his fellow-labourers:—

“We, the English reformers, have approached as nearly as possibly we could do, the church of the apostles, and *the ancient catholic bishops and Fathers*, which we know was yet a perfect, and, as Tertullian saith, an unspotted virgin, and not contaminated with any idolatry, or any great or public error. Neither have we only reformed our doctrine, and *made it like theirs*, but we have also brought the celebration of the sacraments and the forms of our public rites and prayers to an exact resemblance with their institutions or customs.”—Chap. vi. 15.

In his latest production, Cranmer says,—

“Touching my doctrine of the sacrament, and other my doctrine, of what kind soever it be, I protest that it was never my mind to write, speak, or understand any thing contrary to the most holy word of God, *or else against the holy catholic church of CHRIST*, but purely and simply to imitate and teach those things only which I have learned from the sacred scriptures, *and of the holy catholic church of CHRIST from the beginning, and also according to the exposition of the most holy and learned Fathers and martyrs of the Church.*

“And if any thing hath peradventure chanced otherwise than I thought, I may err; but heretic I cannot be, forasmuch as *I am ready in all things to follow the judgment of the most sacred word of God, and of the holy catholic church*, desiring none other things than meekly and gently to be taught, if anywhere (which God forbid) I have swerved from the truth.

“And I profess and openly confess, that in all my doctrine and preaching, both of the sacrament, and of other my doctrine whatsoever it be, not only *I mean and judge*

those things as the catholic church, and the most holy Fathers of old, with one accord have meant and judged, but also I would gladly use the same words that they used, and not use any other words, but to set my hand to all and singular their speeches, phrases, ways, and forms of speech, which they do use in the treatises upon the sacrament, and to keep still their interpretation. But in this thing I only am accused for a heretic, because I allow not the doctrine lately brought in of the sacrament, and because I consent not to words not accustomed in scripture, and unknown to the ancient Fathers, but newly invented and brought in by men, and tending to the destruction of souls, and overthrow of the old and pure religion."

Ridley thus speaks to the same effect:—

"In that the church of God is in doubt, I use herein the wise counsel of Vincentius Lirinensis, whom I am sure you will allow, who, giving precepts how the catholic church may be in all schisms and heresies known, writeth in this manner: 'When,' saith he, 'one part is corrupted with heresies, then prefer the whole world before that one part; but if the greatest part be infected, then prefer antiquity.' In like sort now, when I perceive the greatest part of Christianity to be infected with the poison of the see of Rome, *I repair to the usage of the primitive church.*"—*Ridley's Life of Ridley*, pp. 613, 614.

For these extracts I am indebted to the Appendix to Dr Hook's Sermon, preached at the Primary Visitation of the bishop of Ripon, where several more to the same purport may be found.

To the same effect Luther writes in one of his later productions, his *Letter to the Markgrave Albert against certain factious spirits*, (Walch. ch. xx. p. 2096,) where, speaking of the presence of Christ in the supper, he says: "Which testimony of the whole holy Christian church (even had we nought else) should be alone enough to induce us to abide by this doctrine, and neither to hear nor to bear any factious spirit who would oppose it; for it

is dangerous and dreadful to hear or believe any thing against the unanimous witness, belief, and doctrine of the entire holy Christian church, as maintained universally for 1500 years." What a convenient resource is the unanimous *consent* of the church to those who have something to defend from which scripture *dissents*!

That this was not merely Luther's private feeling, but was shared by his associates, is evident from the concluding sentence of the Augsburg confession:—"Tantum ea recitata sunt, quæ videbantur necessario dicenda esse, ut intelligi possit in doctrina ac ceremoniis, apud nos nihil esse receptum contra scripturam aut ecclesiam catholicam, quia manifestum est nos diligentissime cavisse, ne qua nova et impia dogmata in ecclesias nostras serperent."—Ap. *Guericke Allgemeine Christliche Symbolik*, s. 164.

NOTE F, p. 54.

CHRYSOSTOM AND OTHERS ON 2 TIM. I. 13.

"After the custom of painters, says he, I have delineated for thee an image of virtue and of all things pleasing to God, which I have instilled into thy mind as a sort of canon, archetype and outline. These things, then, hold fast; and if thou art required to take counsel for aught relating to faith, or love, or a sound mind, borrow thine examples thence. Thou shalt not require to seek for thyself an image from others, as all things are included in that." Chrysostom in loc. Ap. Suicer. *Thes. Eccles.* in voc. ὑποτύπωσις.

To the same effect are the remarks of Theodoret and Theophylact on this phrase, as quoted also by Suicer, l. c.

Heinrichs explains ὑποτύπωσην, by calling it "formam seu ideam animo impressam." In loc. *Nov. Test. Koppianum*, vol. vii. In this he follows Grotius, whose note on the

passage stands thus:—"ὑποτ. *exemplar* ut 1 Tim. i. 16, sed intellige exemplar in animo fixum quod ἰδέαν Platonici vocant." Heydenreich, one of the best commentators on the Pastoral Epistles, adopts the same view. The following remarks of Ch. F. Kling, the editor of Flatt's Vorlesungen ueb. d. Briefe am Tim. und Tit. (Tuebingen, 1831,) are judicious and noticeable:—"Böhl takes the word ὑποτ. here in the sense of model or example, as in 1 Tim. i. 16. But here it is a *suggestive*, there a *hortatory* and *convincing* example (which is quite in keeping with Paul's mode of adducing an example in its practical signification, 1 Cor. x. 6). Here, consequently, the meaning is:—Hold fast the pure doctrine as a model for thine own teaching. The supposition that Timothy is here exhorted to impress upon himself, and lay at the basis of his teaching a *summary* of the doctrine of salvation received from Paul, seems somewhat too methodical." s. 233. To these interpretations of this passage, we may add that of Mr Keble, who adopts the same view. "Hold fast," says he, paraphrasing Paul's words, "as a model for thyself, 'the form of sound words,' the course of healthful orthodox interpretations and doctrines, 'which thou hast heard of me.'"—*Sermon*, p. 18.

NOTE G, p. 80.

THE EVIDENCE FOR SCRIPTURE AND FOR TRADITION COMPARED.

The advocates of tradition are apt to complain that its opponents demand a higher amount of evidence in support of it, than they are willing to accept in support of scripture. On this head, Mr Keble enters his *caveat*, in the following terms:—

"We should be careful that we are not, unknown to

ourselves, expecting *demonstration*, where *practical proof* only is attainable and ought to be sufficient. Somewhat of this error appears to lurk in those minds, which reject the notion of a rule of faith made up of scripture and tradition together, on the ground that scripture is infallible, tradition merely historical. They appear to reason as if there could be no faith without demonstrative infallible evidence. The truer statement surely would be, that such evidence, complete in all its parts, leaves no room for faith; and therefore we are nowhere left to such evidence alone. Is it not so, that in regard of those truths the evidence whereof is most entirely scriptural, we are yet to depend on common historical proof both for the genuineness and the right interpretation of the text? And as the stream can rise no higher than the fountain, so our assent even to scriptural truths differs not from our assent to other well attested historical propositions, so far as the kind of evidence is concerned."

Now, if by *demonstration* in this passage the author means such proof as is used in establishing *necessary* truths, (*e. g.* those of geometry,) it is at once conceded, that to demand this either for tradition or for scripture, would be preposterous; for neither of these belongs to that class of truths to which such evidence is appropriate. But if by *demonstration* he means such proof as affords a *moral certainty* of the truth affirmed, in other words, as shows that under the circumstances specified, it cannot but be true, then it is what we have a right to demand in support of whatever is offered to us as a divine guide in the matter of religion; for, if there be any *reasonable doubt* as to the divine origin of such an authority, it would not be safe to yield to it that deference which a really divine guide deserves.

Such demonstration we have both of the divinity and of the integrity of scripture. The argument in the former case goes to show that the divine origin of the sacred volume is morally certain, and that the supposition of its being an

imposture, is, in the circumstances of the case, utterly *impossible*. If the argument from miracles, as developed for instance by Paley, be not worth this much, it is worth nothing. So also with the argument for the integrity of the sacred text. If sound, it goes to show, that bating doubtful passages (which are *therefore* because it cannot be shown to be impossible that the received reading should not be the true one,) the supposition that the sacred text has been corrupted, is, under the circumstances, morally impossible, and if it does not show this, it cannot be regarded as sound. The evidence in both cases is the same—that derived from the *concurrent testimony* of witnesses whose integrity is unimpeachable; the witnesses in the former case being the early Christians, and those in the latter case being the different extant MSS. of the sacred text. Now, this evidence, as every one knows, amounts, when it is complete, to what may really be called *infallible*, because it is *impossible*, without a sort of miracle, that such evidence should be procurable for a falsehood.

Such is the evidence for scripture: Can the advocates of tradition afford any thing approaching to this in support of its claims? Is not the proving that it is possible tradition *may* be certain, the utmost to which, even supposing their arguments sound, they can pretend? And is it not preposterous in the extreme to speak of such evidence being on a par with that which may be adduced in favour of scripture?

What Mr K. intends by the two concluding sentences of the above extract I am at a loss to conceive. His meaning would *seem* to be, that we receive the doctrines of scripture on the same grounds on which we receive well-attested historical facts; and the reason he assigns for this *seems* to be, that it is on mere “historical proof that we depend for both the genuineness and the right interpretation of the text.” But I can hardly believe that this is what he means, for its obvious absurdity is too glaring to have escaped his notice. No man surely would, for a

moment, imagine that we receive the doctrine of the atonement on the same sort of evidence on which we believe in the existence of Martin Luther; and even supposing it admitted that it is on mere common historical proof that we receive the sacred text as genuine, yet to infer from this that the ground on which we receive what that text announces is purely historical also, would be as absurd, as it would be to conclude, that because it is by the testimony of the senses that we perceive a diagram, it is on the same evidence that we receive the truths of mathematics. The evidence which proves that the Bible is God's word is one thing; the evidence on which we receive what God tells us there is quite another thing, and to confound the one with the other is absurd.

NOTE H, p. 94.

DIFFICULTIES ATTENDING THE STUDY OF THE FATHERS.

“Since we find these few and brief undoubted remains of the first Christian age floating amidst a vast sea of forgeries, this must add incalculable and hopeless embarrassment to one who should seek to build up his faith on such materials; nor can it be said that these difficulties need not affect the common Christian, who may be well content to leave such questions to the investigation of scholars, and acquiesce in their judgment, as in a competent authority; for the scholar himself will, in very many cases, be unable to arrive at more than probability, far too weak a foundation in matters of faith; nor can such questions, as to the authenticity of particular writings, be by any means considered as questions of curiosity only, for they often affect the essentials of faith. Thus a second series of Epistles, attributed to Ignatius, and indeed the first published and interpolated edition of the series generally re-

ceived, are considered to be deeply tainted with the Arian heresy, and, on this ground, found a zealous defender in Whiston."—*Conybeare's Bampton Lecture for 1839*, p. 113, 114.

A late editor of the works of Tertullian tells us that when he began to read that author, "non dici potest quam molestum mihi visum fuerit orationis genus obscurum, ac barbarismis et solecismis refertum, quo usus est Tertullianus."—Leopold. Praef. in tom. i. opp. Tertulliani. Lips. 1839. It is no great wonder that modern scholars should be puzzled with Tertullian, when even Lactantius himself complains of his style: "Septimius quoque Tertullianus fuit omni genere literarum peritus, sed in eloquendo parum facilis, et minus comtus, et multum obscurus fuit."—*Div. Inst.* lib. v. c. i.

NOTE I, p. 97.

DANGER OF RENOUNCING THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE JUDGMENT.

"You say again confidently, that if this infallibility be once impeached, every man is given over to his own wit and discourse; which if you mean discourse not guiding itself by scripture, but only by principles of nature, or perhaps by prejudices and popular errors, and drawing consequences not by rule, but chance, is by no means true. If you mean by discourse right reason, grounded on Divine revelation and common notions written by God in the hearts of all men, and deducing, according to the never-failing rules of logic, consequent deductions from them: If this be it which you mean by discourse, it is very meet, and reasonable, and necessary, that men, as in all their actions, so especially in that of the greatest importance, the choice of their way to happiness should be

left unto it; and he that follows this in all his opinions and actions, and does not only seem to do so, follows always God; whereas he that followeth a company of men, may oftentimes follow a company of beasts: and in saying this, I say no more than St John to all Christians, in these words: ‘Dearly beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits, whether they be of God, or no.’ And the rule he gives them to make this trial by is, to consider whether they confess Jesus to be the Christ; that is, the guide of their faith, and Lord of their actions; not whether they acknowledge the pope to be his vicar. I say no more than St Paul, in exhorting all Christians ‘to try all things, and hold fast that which is good;’ than St Peter, in commanding all Christians to be ready to give a reason of the hope that is in them; than our Saviour himself, in forewarning all his followers, that if they blindly follow blind guides, both leaders and followers should fall into the ditch; and again, in saying even to the people, ‘Yea, and why of yourselves judge ye not what is right?’ And though by passion, or precipitation, or prejudice, by want of reason, or not using what they have, men may be, and are oftentimes, ‘ed into error and mischief; yet, that they cannot be misguided by discourse, truly so called, such as I have described, you yourself have given them security. For what is discourse, but drawing conclusions out of premises by good consequence? Now, the principles which we have settled, to wit, the scriptures, are on all sides agreed to be infallibly true. And you have told us in the fourth chapter of this pamphlet, that ‘from truth no man can, by good consequence, infer falsehood;’ therefore, by discourse no man can possibly be led to error; but if he err in his conclusions, he must of necessity either err in his principles, (which here cannot have place,) or commit some error in his discourse; that is, indeed, not discourse, but seem to do so.”—*Chillingworth’s Religion of Protestants*. Works, vol. i. pp. 40, 41.

“It is most essential to keep in mind, that, in order to

take a practical view of this question, we must consider each man as understanding by 'church authority' the declarations of *his own* pastors, and of the authorised Confessions of Faith, &c. of the *particular religious community* of which he is a member. For it would manifestly be a mere mockery, to tell the great mass of unlearned Christians, 'you must obey the church; but it must be, not necessarily the community you belong to, but the *true* church: you must be guided by the orthodox and regular ministers of the church; but not necessarily by *your own* teachers, unless you can ascertain their apostolical succession for eighteen centuries: you must examine all the decisions of general councils, having first settled the claims of each to divine authority; you must consult the works of all the ancient Fathers, observing what are the points wherein they agree, and which of these are essential points; and this, after having first ascertained the orthodoxy of each, and decided on the degree of weight due to his opinion. And for this purpose, you must ascertain also the characters and qualifications of those modern divines who have undertaken to select, translate, and comment upon some thirty or forty of those voluminous writers.' To require all this of the great body of plain ordinary Christians, who, by supposition, have not sufficient learning or ability to judge for themselves of the true sense of scripture, would be an absurdity too gross to be seriously intended by any one. If we were to tell a plain unscientific man, ignorant of astronomy, and destitute of telescopes, that he must regulate his hours, not by *the town-clock*, but by the satellites of Jupiter, from observations and calculations of their eclipses, no one could be made to believe that we were speaking seriously.

"It is plain, therefore, that to recommend ordinary Christians to give up their judgment to the guidance of 'the church,' is to refer them to the guidance of the pastors of their own denomination. They not only *will*, but they *must* so understand the recommendation. They have

no means of complying with it in any other way, unless they exercise (which, by supposition, they are forbidden to do) their own private judgment in deciding on the claims of their pastors."—*Whately's Essays on some of the Dangers to the Christian Faith, &c.*, pp. 180, 181.

I cannot refrain here from referring my readers to an exceedingly able discussion of the whole of this question, in a late number of the *Edinburgh Review*, (No. 154, for January 1843, Art. IV.) In this article sound reasoning is most felicitously combined with a certain piquancy of style, which renders the perusal of it as agreeable as it is instructive.

NOTE J, p. 138.

A CHURCH, AND *THE* CHURCH.

"We are wont to speak of the foundation of the church,—the authority of the church,—the various characteristics of the church,—and the like,—as if the church were, originally at least, one society in all respects. From the period in which the gospel was planted beyond the precincts of Judea, this manifestly ceased to be the case; and as Christian societies were formed among people more and more unconnected and dissimilar in character and circumstances, the difficulty of considering the church as one society increases. Still, from the habitual and unreflecting use of this phrase, 'the church,' it is no uncommon case to confound the two notions; and occasionally to speak of the various societies of Christians as *one*, occasionally as *distinct* bodies. The mischief which has been grafted on this inadvertency in the use of the term, has already been noticed; and it is no singular instance of the enormous practical results which may be traced to mere ambiguity of expression. The church is undoubtedly *one*,

and so is the human race *one*; but not as a *society*. It was from the first composed of distinct societies, which were called one, because formed on common principles. It is one society only when considered as to its future existence. The circumstance of its having one common Head, Christ, one Spirit, one Father, are points of unity, which no more make the church one society on earth, than the circumstance of all men having the same Creator, and being derived from the same Adam, renders the human race one family. That scripture often speaks of Christians generally under the term 'the church,' is true; but if we wish fully to understand the force of the term so applied, we need only call to mind the frequent analogous use of ordinary historical language when no such doubt occurs. Take, for example, Thucydides's History of the Peloponnesian War. It contains an account of the transactions of two opposed parties, each made up of many distinct communities; on the one side were democracies, on the other oligarchies. Yet precisely the same use is made by the historian of the terms 'the democracy' and the 'oligarchy,' as we find scripture adopting with regard to the term 'the church.' No one is misled by these, so as to suppose the community of Athens *one* with that of Coreyra, or the Theban with that of the Lacedæmonian. When the heathen writer speaks of 'the democracy of' or 'in' the various democratical states, we naturally understand him to mean distinct societies *formed on similar principles*; and so, doubtless, ought we to interpret the sacred writers when they, in like manner, make mention of the church of, or in, Antioch, Rome, Ephesus, Corinth, &c."—*Whately's Essays on some of the Dangers, &c.*, pp. 167, 168.

NOTE K, p. 171.

OPINIONS OF THE REFORMERS CONCERNING THE
INVISIBILITY OF THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL.

“According to Zuingli, in his *Expositio fidei Christianæ*, the ‘ecclesia invisibilis’ is the only true one; it is that ‘quæ ex coelo descendit,’ which, through the enlightening of the Holy Spirit, ‘Deum agnoscit et amplectitur,’ and to which belong all believers everywhere; it is called invisible, because to the eye of man it does not appear who are true believers. Hence he has no higher or deeper notion of the visible church, than that it is the aggregate of all those throughout the world who outwardly profess Christianity.”—*Guericke Allgemeine Symbolik*, s. 546.

“In symbolo, ubi profiteamur nos credere ecclesiam, id non solum ad visibilem, de qua nunc agimus, refertur, sed ad omnes quoque electos Dei, in quorum numero comprehenduntur etiam qui morte defuncti sunt.”—*Calvini Inst. Christ. Rel.*, lib. iv. cap. i. sect. 2.

“Oportet semper fuisse, esse et futuram esse ecclesiam, id est e mundo evocatum vel collectum coetum fidelium, sanctorum inquam omnium communionem, eorum videlicet, qui Deum verum in Christo servatore per verbum et spiritum sanctum vere cognoscunt et rite colunt, denique omnibus bonis per Christum gratuito oblati fide participant.”—*Confess. Helvet.*, ii. c. 17.

“Credimus unicam ecclesiam catholicam seu universalem, quæ est congregatio sancta seu coetus omnium vere fidelium Christianorum, qui totam suam salutem in uno Iesu Christo expectant, sanguine ipsius abluti et per spiritum eius sanctificati atque obsignati. . . . Sancta hæc ecclesia certo in loco non est sita vel limitata aut ad certas singularesque personas alligata, sed per totum mundum sparsa atque diffusa.”—*Conf. Belg.* art. 27.

“ We believe in one holy Christian church, *i. e.* the community of the saints, the assembly of those who believe through the Spirit, which is the holy and one bride of Christ, and of which all are members who truly acknowledge Christ to be the Lamb of God, and approve this faith by works of love.”—*Bekent. Basil.*, art. 5.

Comp. F. Turretini Inst. Theol. Elenct., p. iii. loc. 18, qu. 7.

NOTE L, p. 172.

ANGLO-CATHOLIC ASSUMPTIONS AND DENUNCIATIONS.

As specimens of the language continually held by Anglo-catholics as to the exclusive enjoyment by them of the full privileges of Christianity, the following out of a multitude must suffice :—

“ We who believe the Nicene creed, must acknowledge it a high privilege that we belong to the apostolic church. How is it that so many of us are, almost avowedly, so cold and indifferent in our thoughts of this privilege? . . .

“ I fear it must be owned that much of the evil is owing to the comparatively low ground which we ourselves, as the ministers of God, have chosen to occupy in defence of our commission. For many years we have been much in the habit of resting our claim on the general duties of submission to authority, of decency and order—of respecting precedents long established, instead of appealing to that warrant which marks us, *exclusively*, for GOD’S AMBASSADORS.”—*Tract No. 4*, p. 1.

“ Under this head [viz. of ‘ those who receive and teach a part, but not the whole of the truth, *erring in respect of one or more fundamental doctrines*’] are included most of what are called ‘ Protestant dissenters.’ The chief of these are Presbyterians, Independents, Methodists, Baptists, and Quakers.”—*Tract No. 30*, p. 3.

“Consecration by apostolic authority is essential to the participation of the eucharist, and so far generally necessary to salvation.”—*Keble's Sermon*, &c., p. 78.

“A person not commissioned from the bishop may use the words of baptism, and sprinkle or bathe with the water on earth; but there is no promise from Christ that such a man shall admit souls to the kingdom of heaven. A person not commissioned may break bread and pour out wine, and pretend to give the Lord's supper; but it can afford *no comfort* to any to receive it at his hands, because there is no warrant from Christ to lead communicants to suppose, that while he does so here on earth, they will be partakers in the Saviour's heavenly body and blood. And as for the person himself who takes upon himself without warrant to minister in holy things, he is all the while treading in the footsteps of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.”—*Tract No. 35*, p. 3.

“The presbyterians of Scotland were innovators Their opinion was erroneous, but had it merely extended to a preference for the Presbyterian form, it might have been in some degree tolerated: it would not have cut them off from the church of Christ; but it was the exaggeration of their opinion: their separation for the sake of this opinion, their actual rejection of the authority and communion of the existing successors of the apostles in Scotland, and therefore of the universal church, in all ages, that marks them out as schismatics; and all the temporal enactments and powers of the whole world would not cure this fault, nor render them a portion of the church of Christ. . . . With regard to all the other sects in Scotland which have seceded from the Presbyterian community, the same observations apply to them all. Their predecessors, the Presbyterians, voluntarily separated themselves from the catholic church of Christ, and they, in departing from the Presbyterian communion, have not yet returned to that of the true church. Consequently, they form no part of the church of Christ.”—

Palmer on the Church, vol. i. part i. ch. iv. sect. 2; ch. xii. sect. 1, 3; part. ii. ch. i.

NOTE M, p. 173.

SALVATION THROUGH THE CHURCH.

“The notion of the church as the storehouse and direct channel of grace, as a divine ordinance, not merely to be maintained for order’s sake, or because schism is a sin, but to be approached joyfully and expectantly as a definite instrument, or rather the appointed means of spiritual blessings,—as an ordinance which conveys secret strength and life to every one who shares in it, unless there be some actual moral impediment in his own mind,—this is a doctrine which as yet is but faintly understood among us. . . . We have almost embraced the doctrine, that God conveys grace only through the instrumentality of the mental energies, that is, through faith, prayer, active spiritual contemplations, or (what is called) communion with God, in contradiction to the primitive view, according to which the church and her sacraments are the ordained and direct visible means of conveying to the soul what is in itself supernatural and unseen. For example, would not most men maintain, on the first view of the subject, that to administer the Lord’s supper to infants, or to the dying and apparently insensible, however consistently pious and believing in their past lives, under all circumstances, and in every conceivable case, was a superstition? And yet both practices have the sanction of primitive usage.”—*Adv. to Vol. II. of the Tracts for the Times*, p. 4.

“It is in the church that we have our religious life derived to us, not as individuals, but by virtue of incorporation into her body.” “God has not chosen to establish

his relations with each of us on a distinct and individual footing, but has constituted us in a body, to derive from its source of life a portion of its general life." "The individual mind will flag from time to time, or entirely; sin will rise like a cloud between the Redeemer and the offending soul: then it is that the idea of the church, and the fact of incorporation into Him through the church, will remain a token of Divine love, and a solace to the penitent, a sign for good in the midst of darkness otherwise impenetrable."—*Gladstone's Church Principles*, pp. 5, 147, 151.

NOTE N, p. 177.

BELLARMINE ON THE VISIBLE UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

"Nostra sententia est, ecclesiam unam tantum esse, non duas, et illam unam et veram esse coetum hominum, eiusdem Christianae fidei professione et eorundem sacramentorum communione colligatum, sub regimine legitimorum pastorum ac praecipue unius Christi in terris vicarii, Romani pontificis. Ex qua definitione facile colligi potest, qui homines ad ecclesiam pertineant, qui vero ad eam non pertineant. Tres enim sunt partes huius definitionis. Professio verae fidei sacramentorum communio et subiectio ad legitimum pastorem, Romanum pontificem. Ratione primae partis excluduntur omnes infideles, tam qui nunquam fuerunt in ecclesia, ut Judaei, Turcae, Pagani, tam qui fuerunt et recesserunt, ut haeretici et apostatae. Ratione secundae excluduntur catechumeni et excommunicati, quoniam illi non sunt admissi ad sacramentorum communionem, isti sunt dimissi. Ratione tertiae excluduntur schismatici, qui habent fidem et sacramenta, sed non subduntur legitimo pastori, et ideo foris profitentur fidem et sacramenta precipiunt. Includuntur autem om-

nes alii, etiamsi reprobi, scelesti et impii sunt. Atque hoc interest inter sententiam nostram et alias omnes, quod omnes aliae requirunt internas virtutes ad constituendum aliquem in ecclesia, et propterea ecclesiam veram invisibilem faciunt; nos autem et credimus, in ecclesia inveniri omnes virtutes, fidem, spem, caritatem, et ceteras, tamen ut aliquis aliquo modo dici possit pars verae ecclesiae, de qua scripturae loquuntur, non putamus requiri ullam internam virtutem, sed tantum externam professionem fidei et sacramentorum communionem, quae sensu ipso percipitur. Ecclesia enim est coetus hominum ita visibilis et palpabilis, ut est coetus populi Romani, vel regnum Galliae, aut respublica Venetorum.”—*Eccles. Milit.*, c. 2.

NOTE O, p. 179.

BOSSUET'S ARGUMENT FOR THE CHURCH OF ROME.

“La doctrine de l'Eglise catholique consiste en quatre points dont l'enchaînement est inviolable: l'un, que l'Eglise est visible; l'autre, qu'elle est toujours; le troisième, que la vérité de l'évangile est toujours professée par toute la société; le quatrième, qu'il n'est pas permis de s'éloigner de sa doctrine: ce qui veut dire en autres termes, qu'elle est infaillible.

“Le premier point est fondé sur un fait constant: c'est que le terme d'Eglise signifie toujours dans l'Ecriture, et ensuite dans le langage commun des fidèles, une société visible. Les catholiques le posent ainsi, et il a fallu que les protestans en convinssent, comme on verra.

“Le second point, que l'Eglise est toujours, n'est pas moins constant, puisqu'il est fondé sur les promesses de Jesus Christ, dont on convient dans tous les partis.

“De-là on infere très-clairement le troisième point, que la vérité est toujours professée par la société de l'Eglise;

car l'Eglise n'étant visible que par la profession de la vérité, il s'ensuit que si elle est toujours, et qu'elle soit toujours visible, il ne se peut qu'elle n'enseigne et ne professe toujours la vérité de l'Evangile: d'où il suit aussi clairement le quatrième point, qu'il n'est pas permis de dire que l'Eglise soit dans l'erreur, ni de s'écarter de sa doctrine: et tout cela est fondé sur la promesse qui est avouée dans tous les partis, puisqu'enfin, la même promesse qui fait que l'Eglise est toujours, fait qu'elle est toujours dans l'état qu'emporte le terme d'Eglise: par conséquent toujours visible et toujours enseignant la vérité. Il n'y a rien de plus simple, ni de plus clair, ni de plus suivi que cette doctrine."—*Hist. des Var.*, tom. ii. p. 356. Paris, 1730.

NOTE P, p. 203.

THEOPHYLACT ON MATT. XXVIII. 20. CHRYSOSTOM ON THE AUTHORITY OF THE APOSTLES.

Of the two interpretations referred to in the text, the former is adopted by Theophylact, while, in favour of the latter, we may borrow the words of Chrysostom in one of his eulogies of the apostles. "Not only to the apostles," says the former, "was this being present with them promised, but also to all Christ's disciples simply as such; for the apostles, indeed, were not to live till the end; so that to us and to those after us has this been promised." In Matt. xxviii. 20, "The apostles," says the latter, "traversed the whole world, became rulers more lordly than all rulers, than kings more mighty. For kings, indeed, exercise power whilst they live, but when they die their power lapses; but these, when dead, rule the more. The laws of kings have force within their own dominions, but the ordinances of the fishermen have been extended

every where through the habitable earth. The emperor of the Romans cannot legislate for the Persians, nor can the king of the Persians for the Romans; but these men of Palestine have imposed their laws alike on Romans and Persians, Thracians and Scythians, Indians and Moors, nay all over the world. Not only while living have they thus been powerful, but also since they were dead; and of those by whom these laws have been received, there is not one who would not a thousand times rather lose his life than revolt against them." In *Psalm* xliv. ver. 17.

NOTE Q, p. 247.

INDEPENDENCY OF THE EARLY CHURCHES.

"All the churches, of the first age, however closely united by the bond of faith and love, and however ready to render to each other all mutual good offices, were under their own jurisdiction, and governed each one itself without foreign aid, or any external authority. Nowhere either in the sacred books, or in any other ancient documents, is any thing recorded from which we might learn that some churches were dependent on the authority and will of other churches larger or more dignified than they. On the contrary, evidences meet us on all hands, which place it beyond doubt, that all had an equal right, and were entirely peers and equals one with another."—*Mosheim de Rebus Christianorum*, Sæc. i. sect. 48. The same author, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, uses language of a similar kind. "Through the greater part of this century [the second] the churches were as yet self-governed; nor were they united in any alliance or confederation. Each society was a sort of little state governing itself by its own laws—laws either introduced or approved by the people."—Sæc. ii. p. 2. c. 2.

“ The form of the Christian republic, as we detect it in the first and second centuries, may be called in a sense *democratic*, because, with the entire assembly of the people, lay the right and power of choosing the presidents, teachers, and ministers. To the assembly (church), in the stricter sense, belonged only the *believers* (*πιστοί*), *i. e.* those Christians who partook of the sacraments and love-feasts, and bore the names of *brethren* and *sisters*. In a looser sense, the *catechumens* also, of whom the greater part at that time were of adult age, were regarded as part of the church.”—*Augusti Hist. Eccles. Epit.*, sect. 21.

For the opinions of Campbell, see his 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th Lectures on Church History; of Waddington, see his Church History, chap. ii.; of Gieseler, see his Church History, vol. i. sect. 30 and sect. 50; and of Neander, see his History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church, &c., translated by J. E. Ryland, vol. i. iii. 5, and his Church History, translated by Rose, vol. i.

To these statements of professed church historians, it may not be amiss to add the following from the pens of writers whose competency to pronounce upon such a subject is undeniable, and who, in a case like this, may fairly be regarded as impartial.

“ At first each church was settled apart under its own bishop and presbyters; so as independently and separately to manage its own concerns; each was *αὐτοκέφαλος* and *αὐτόνομος*, ‘governed by its own head, and had its own laws.’ Every bishop, as a prince in his own church, did act freely according to his will and discretion, with the advice of his ecclesiastical senate, and with the consent of his people, (the which he did use to consult,) without being controllable by any other, or accountable to any, farther than his obligation to uphold the verity of the Christian profession, and to maintain fraternal communion in charity and peace with neighbouring churches did require; in which regard, if he were vitally peccant, he was liable to be disclaimed by them, as no good Christian, and ejected from commu-

nion, together with his church, if it did adhere to him in his misdemeanours.”—*Barrow’s Treatise on the Pope’s Supremacy*. * Works, vol. vii. p. 302.

“The societies which were instituted in the cities of the Roman Empire were united only by the ties of faith and charity. Independence and equality formed the basis of their internal constitution.”—*Gibbon’s Decline and Fall*, &c., ch. xv.

“It appears plainly from the sacred narrative, that though the many churches which the apostles founded were branches of one *spiritual* brotherhood, of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the heavenly head,—though there was ‘one Lord, one faith, one baptism,’ for all of them, yet they were each a distinct, independent community *on earth*, united by the common principles on which they were founded, and by their mutual agreement, affection, and respect; but not having any one recognised head on earth, or acknowledging any sovereignty of one of these societies over others.

“And as for—so called—General Councils, we find not even any mention of them, or allusion to any such expedient. The pretended first council, at Jerusalem, does seem to me a most extraordinary chimera, without any warrant whatever from sacred history. We find in the narrative, that certain persons, coming from Jerusalem to Antioch, endeavoured to impose on the Gentile converts the yoke of the Mosaic law; pretending, as appears plainly from the context, to have the sanction of the apostles for this. Nothing could be more natural than the step which was thereupon taken, to send a deputation to Jerusalem, to inquire whether these pretensions were well founded. The apostles, in the midst of an assembly of the elders, (or clergy, as they would now be called) of Jerusalem, decided that no such burden ought to be imposed, and that their pretended sanction had not been given. The church at Jerusalem, even independently of the apostles, had of course power to decide this last point; *i. e.* to declare the

fact whether they had or had not given the pretended sanction: and the apostles, confessedly, had plenary power to declare the will of the Lord Jesus. And the deputation accordingly retired satisfied. There is no hint throughout of any summons to the several churches in Judea and Galilee, in Samaria, Cyprus, Cyrene, &c. to send deputations, as to a general council; nor any assumption of a right in the *church* of Jerusalem, as such, to govern the rest, or to decide on points of faith.”—*Whately's Essays on the Kingdom of Christ*, pp. 138–9, 3d ed.

NOTE R, p. 264.

PASSAGES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IN WHICH THE WORD
“MYSTERY” IS USED.

For the convenience of the reader, I have collected these passages in this note, so that he will easily perceive, by looking over them, the justice of the remarks in the text:

Unto you it is given *to know the mystery* of the kingdom of God. Mark iv. 11.

For I would not, brethren, that ye should *be ignorant of this mystery*. Rom. xi. 25.

The *revelation of the mystery*, which was kept secret, but is now *made manifest*. Rom. xvi. 25, 26.

But we *speak the wisdom of God in a mystery*. 1 Cor. ii. 7.

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. 1 Cor. iv. 1.

Though I *understand all mysteries*. 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

Howbeit, in the Spirit he *speaketh mysteries*. 1 Cor. xiv. 2.

Behold I *show you a mystery*. 1 Cor. xv. 21.

Having *made known unto you the mystery* of his will. Ephes. i. 7.

How that by revelation he *made known unto me this mystery*; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may *understand my knowledge in the mysteries* of Christ.) And to make all men *see* what is the fellowship of the mystery. Ephes. ii. 4, 5, 9.

This is a great mystery, but I speak *concerning Christ and the church*. Ephes. v. 32.

To make *known the mystery* of the gospel. Ephes. vi. 19.

Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but is *now made manifest to his saints*; to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you the hope of glory. Col. i. 26, 27.

To the *acknowledgment of the mystery of God*, and of the Father, and of Christ. Col. ii. 2.

To *speak the mystery* of Christ, for which I am also in bonds. That I might *make it manifest* as I ought to speak. Col. iv. 3, 4.

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work. 2 Thess. ii. 7.

Holding the *mystery of the faith* in a pure conscience. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh. 1 Tim. iii. 9—16.

The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest, &c. Rev. i. 20.

But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God is finished, as he hath declared by his servants the prophets. Rev. x. 7.

And upon his forehead was a name written, Mystery, &c. And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou sound? I will show thee the mystery of the woman, &c. Rev. xvii. 5, 7.

NOTE S, p. 323.

NEWMAN ON JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH.

In reading Mr Newman's work on Justification, nothing has afforded me greater satisfaction than to perceive how just and scriptural is his view of the nature and work of *faith* in the matter of salvation; though this renders it all the more painful to find him mixing up, with so much sound truth, the deleterious error with which in other respects his work is filled. Nothing, as it appears to me, can be juster than the following remarks:—

“The doctrine of justifying faith is a summary of the whole process of salvation, from first to last; a sort of philosophical analysis of the gospel, a contemplation of it as a whole, rather than as a practical direction. If it must be taken as a practical direction, and I do not deny that there is a sense in which it may, then we must word it, not ‘justification through faith,’ but ‘justification by Christ.’ Thus interpreted, the sense it gives is ‘go to Christ;’ but taken in the letter, it seems merely *get faith*, become spiritual; see that you are not mere moralists, mere formalists, see that you feel, &c.’ . . . Thus the poor and sorrowful soul, instead of being led at once to the source of all good, is taught to make much of the conflict of truth and falsehood within it, as the pledge of God's love, and to picture to itself, delineate, and set out faith as a sort of passive quality, which sits amid the ruins of the soul, and keeps up what may be called a silent protest, or indulges a pensive meditation on its misery.”

“True faith is what may be called colourless, like air or water; it is but the medium through which the soul sees Christ; and the soul as little rests upon it, and contemplates it, as the eye can see the air. When men, then, are bent on holding it (as it were) in their hands,

curiously inspecting, analysing, and so aiming at it, they are obliged to colour and thicken it, that it may be seen and touched; that is, they substitute for it something or other, a feeling, notion, sentiment, conviction, or act of reason, which they may hang over and dote upon. They rather aim at experiences (as they are called) within them, than at Him that is without them." "The Pharisee recounted the signs of God's mercy upon and in him; the publican simply looked to God. The young ruler boasted of his correct life; but the penitent woman anointed Jesus' feet, and kissed them; nay, holy Martha herself spoke of her 'much service,' while Mary waited on Him for the 'one thing needful.' The one thought of themselves; the other thought of Christ. To look at Christ, is to be justified by faith; to think of being justified by faith, is to look from Christ, and to fall from grace."—Pp. 384, 385, 388. To the sentiments contained in these extracts I cordially subscribe, and ardently desire the time when their truth and usefulness may be universally acknowledged by all who look for salvation through Christ Jesus. Simple views of faith,—views which led a man rather to *exercise* faith in the testimony of God concerning his Son, than to *think* and *inquire* about its existence in himself, are closely connected both with the enjoyment of that peace which the gospel brings, and the attainment of that purity which the gospel is designed to impart. It is much to be feared, that salvation by faith is too often preached in a way which does as much harm as the preaching of salvation by works.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE CONNECTION AND HARMONY OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS. Being an Inquiry into the Relation, Literary and Doctrinal, in which these two parts of the Sacred Volume stand to each other. 8vo. Price 12s.

THE UNITY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, AND THE COMMUNION OF CHRISTIANS. A Discourse, &c. 8vo. Price 6d.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A PROPER SYSTEM OF ACADEMIC TRAINING, AS TENDING TO FACILITATE MINISTERIAL DEVOTEDNESS. An Address, &c. 8vo. Price 1s.

THE SPIRITUAL DESTITUTION OF OUR COUNTRY, AND THE BEST MEANS OF REMEDYING IT CONSIDERED in a Discourse, &c. 12mo. Price 6d.

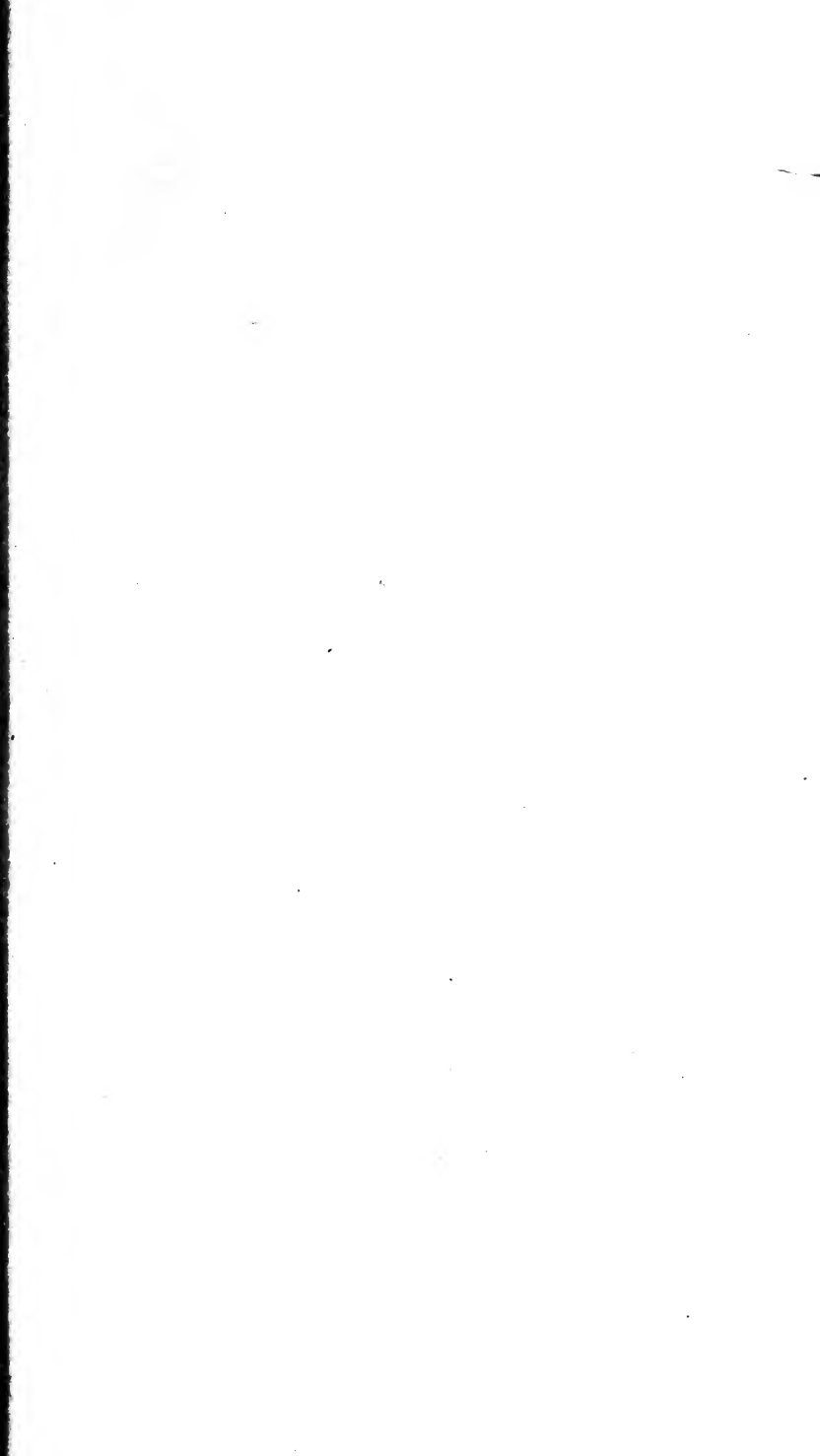
THE DUTY OF SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES MAINTAINED AND ENFORCED. A Discourse, &c. 12mo. Price 6d.

A COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLES OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS. Translated from the German of DR GUSTAV BILLROTH. 2 vols. Post 8vo. Price 12s.

A DEMONSTRATION OF THE TRUE AND ETERNAL DIVINITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. By D. VAN DE WYNPERSE, D.D. A new edition, with Introduction and Appendix. 18mo. Price 3s. 6d.

STUART'S LETTERS TO CHANNING ON THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST. With an Introduction. 18mo. Price 2s.





UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
BERKELEY

Return to desk from which borrowed.

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

RECEIVED (N)

19 May '53 KH

MAY 8 1953 LU

MAY 22 1957

7 Jan '61 EE

RECEIVED

JAN 15 1961

71 20150KK

APR 20 1967 58

u Ren

RECEIVED

NOV 11 1956

APR 6 '67 3 PM

REC'D LD

LOAN DEPT.

OCT 31 1956

22 Mar '57 BP

27721

BX

8:44

AE

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

